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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme and of the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

Joint Report to the Economic and Social Council

Report of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund

Summary

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) have prepared this report in compliance with General Assembly resolution 59/250 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system. For the second time, the Administrator of UNDP and the Executive Director of UNFPA present a joint report on progress towards implementing resolution 59/250, in accordance with the request from Member States for greater harmonization and coordination. In the report, UNDP and UNFPA outline their cooperation both jointly and as part of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG). The report is organized in three sections: section I provides information on the joint implementation by UNDP and UNFPA of resolution 59/250; section II provides information on UNDP activities; and section III provides information on UNFPA activities. The report concludes with section IV, a recommendation to the Executive Board to take note of the report and to transmit it to the Economic and Social Council, together with comments and guidance provided by delegations.

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I. Joint UNDP/UNFPA section

A. Implementation of the reform programme of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review

Capacity development

1. In July 2006, the UNDG programme group provided guidance to resident coordinators and United Nations country teams on how to mainstream capacity development in national development strategies through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. Based on feedback from United Nations country teams, the UNDG task team on capacity development, in which both UNDP and UNFPA participate, is finalizing a position statement on capacity development. The position statement includes a matrix of optional United Nations roles in mainstreaming capacity development as well as an inventory of tools available in the United Nations system.

2. Using this position statement, UNFPA expects to complete in 2006 its national capacity development strategy. Based on country experiences as well as the UNDG matrix on capacity development, the strategy will: (a) assist national counterparts in assessing the national capacity that is necessary to develop and maintain population programmes; (b) prioritize ways to fill gaps; and (c) support monitoring and learning as part of results-based management. The UNDP and UNFPA partnership on the harmonized approach to cash transfers analyses the gaps and needs in the management capacity of implementing national partners and seeks to address them, in collaboration with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

3. UNDP work in capacity development focused on two goals: (a) mainstreaming capacity assessments and strategies into the Millennium Development Goal support services programme; and (b) developing evidence-based policy guidance on key cross-cutting elements of capacity development strategies. For the first goal, UNDP has integrated capacity diagnostic expertise into the Millennium Development Goal teams in the Asia and the Pacific and the Africa regions to ensure that Millennium Development Goal-based national development strategies, including needs assessments and policy choices, reflect capacity assets and gaps. For the second goal, UNDP is articulating seven priority strategies for capacity development within its overall capacity development policy. This work covers capacity diagnostics, knowledge services and learning, leadership development, institutional reform and change management, multi-stakeholder engagement processes, mutual accountability mechanisms and incentive systems. The work of UNDP in strengthening national capacity to manage aid in the context of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness is also reflected in policy guidance on aid management and aid management instruments; on capacity development of national procurement systems; and in direct budget support and sector-wide approaches.

4. During the past year, UNFPA initiated a process of consultation with Member States to regionalize its operations. One of the motivating factors for the proposed regionalization is to leverage technical expertise to develop capacity in the countries and regions UNFPA serves by strengthening technical support to country offices and government partners. By combining existing regional technical capacity with the UNFPA Technical Advisory Programme, UNFPA seeks to anchor technical capacity-building in regional experiences as well as in global best practices. This will ensure that the capacity-building initiatives in UNFPA programming are coordinated, coherent and region-specific.

5. South-South cooperation is an important element of the UNFPA strategy on capacity development. UNFPA is developing an inventory of South-based expertise in population issues, which it will make available to all countries.

Information technology and knowledge sharing

6. In order to support the development of global knowledge sharing and networking among United Nations agencies on the Millennium Development Goals, the UNDG is developing a policy network that will bring together the expertise of the United Nations system and other partners to support countries in implementing Millennium Development Goal-based national development strategies. The UNDG has set up a network of United Nations system colleagues on knowledge networking, in which both UNDP and UNFPA participate. Over 10 United Nations organizations are now building on the UNDP model of knowledge networks. Several global networks have been established in the areas of human rights and debt management. UNDP and UNFPA are working with the knowledge management working groups in the UNDG and in the United Nations Chief Executives' Board. UNDP is working with several of the United Nations regional economic and social commissions to develop new approaches to knowledge sharing to support the Millennium Development Goals. UNDP is also preparing a knowledge management and communications strategy to support the Millennium Development Goals, initially in 18 countries.

Simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures, transaction costs and efficiency

7. Through active participation in the UNDG, UNDP and UNFPA continued efforts to simplify and harmonize their processes and procedures to reduce transaction costs for themselves and for their national partners. With regard to the common country programming process, a recent independent review revealed that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework has contributed to this goal, although much still remains to be done. The ongoing revision of the guidelines for the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework is facilitating these improvements by strengthening national ownership as well as alignment with and involvement in national development plans and processes, and better positioning the United Nations in the new aid environment.

8. In response to paragraph 49 of General Assembly resolution 59/250 on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and in order to better align United Nations programming instruments with national planning processes, the UNDG developed a proposal to simplify the programming process and programming tools. The proposal called for combining several programming instruments (the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the results matrix, the country programme documents and the country programme action plans) into a single, consolidated United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The heads of the UNDG Executive Committee agencies agreed to submit a joint proposal to their respective Executive Boards to revise the approval process of their agency-specific contributions to the consolidated United Nations Development Assistance Framework, in accordance with the UNDG proposal. In September 2006, the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF adopted a decision to shorten the time frame for country programme approval (UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board decision 2006/36 and UNICEF Executive Board decision 2006/19).

9. To facilitate the work of United Nations country teams, the UNDG working group on programme policy is developing a manual on programme policies for the United Nations system and is updating the learning kit on the common country programming process.

10. UNFPA has been actively engaged in sector-wide approaches and has contributed to sector funding baskets in several countries. As a follow up to the Paris High-level Forum on Joint Progress toward Enhanced Aid Effectiveness, UNFPA issued internal guidelines on engagement in sector-wide approaches and poverty reduction strategies, and is strengthening its internal guidance on the new aid environment.

11. UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF presented to the annual sessions 2006 of their respective Executive Boards a joint report on their experiences in implementing joint programming and joint programmes since 2004 (DP/2006/33-DP/FPA/2006/11 and E/ICEF/2006/13 and Add.1). The UNDG is reviewing the guidance note on joint programming to reflect recent changes. One such change is the 2006 UNDG management group endorsement of the proposal to harmonize cost-recovery rates for UNDG Executive Committee agencies participating in multi-donor trust funds, joint programmes and joint offices. The UNDG is providing support through joint programme training and learning modules on programme and operational issues. In 2006, the UNDG Executive Committee agencies developed and deployed to their country offices a harmonized, joint programme reporting format for donors. The UNDG established a joint programme database utilizing information provided by country offices and headquarters on more than 300 joint programmes. It also conducted a review and collated lessons learned from joint programme development and implementation in 14 countries as a key input for the 2006 revision of the joint programming guidance note.

12. In January 2006, the United Nations established the first joint United Nations office – the Office of United Nations funds and programmes in Cape Verde. By the end of 2006, the UNDG will conduct an inter-agency review of the Cape Verde experience to provide information on progress and challenges, and to build on lessons learned in the first year. The lessons learned from the joint office initiative will enable the UNDG Executive Committee agencies to implement the initiative more effectively. Though the joint office was originally thought to be more appropriate for countries with modest United Nations operations, larger countries such as Viet Nam have come forward. The joint office initiative in Viet Nam is progressing rapidly. The challenge is to find different models to meet different country situations, a task that has now been assigned to the Boston Consulting Group.

13. The recommendations of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment are expected to provide a major momentum to increase coherence and effectiveness at the country level.

Coherence, effectiveness and relevance of operational activities for development

Common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework

14. The UNDG is seeking to further improve guidelines and training on the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework. The proposed revisions to the guidelines are expected to: (a) enhance the participation of non-resident agencies; (b) strengthen country ownership; (c) enhance engagement in poverty reduction strategies; and (d) provide criteria to determine when a separate common country assessment is the most appropriate United Nations contribution to analytical work in a country. UNDP and UNFPA are also working to improve the alignment of their country programmes with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, within the current common country programming process.

15. To improve inter-agency collaboration, UNDP and UNFPA have encouraged the participation of the United Nations specialized agencies and the regional economic commissions in the common country programming process, thereby capitalizing on their comparative advantages and enriching the quality of the common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks. The regional economic commissions are providing data and analyses to United Nations country teams. Country analytical work has become a responsibility that is shared with both national and international development partners.

16. Recognizing the importance of ensuring the quality of the common country programming process, UNFPA has increased the level, quality and intensity of its participation in all stages of the country

programming process – in the United Nations country teams; in the regional directors' teams; in the country programme support group and in other UNDG working groups. UNFPA seeks to leverage its comparative advantage in the areas of data, gender, reproductive and sexual health, and population and development.

Resident coordinator system and United Nations country teams

17. As called for in General Assembly resolution 59/250, the UNDG has developed a mutual performance appraisal system for resident coordinators and United Nations country teams. The performance appraisal system reinforces resident coordinator and United Nations accountability for the resident coordinator system. It supports the authority of the resident coordinator as the principal United Nations representative in a country, while recognizing the mandates and representational needs of each member of the United Nations country team. The UNDG is launching globally a pilot programme for a web-based, reciprocal 180 degree assessment tool for resident coordinators and United Nations country team members, which it will implement in 2007. The UNDG is also refining the job description and accountability framework for resident coordinators.

18. Beginning in 2006, the resident coordinator induction programme has included representatives from and partnership with relevant United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies. The UNDG is undertaking efforts to improve the quality of resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator candidates; the gender and regional balance; the selection process; training; and resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator capacity through strengthened professional staff support. At the regional level, dedicated support by the regional directors' teams will further strengthen the resident coordinator system and United Nations country teams. UNDP is redoubling its efforts to introduce country directors in countries with large and medium-sized United Nations country teams.

19. The UNDG working group on common premises and services continued to guide and assist United Nations country teams in establishing United Nations houses and United Nations common premises. Proposed projects include the construction of new premises; the renovation or alteration of existing premises; and more complex projects, such as 'design, build, operate and transfer arrangements' with developers. There are currently 36 projects worldwide. In order to encourage the sharing of office premises at the subnational level, the UNDG took an inventory of the subnational offices of each UNDG Executive Committee agency. To better manage the common premises and services programme, the UNDG rolled out a common services management system in 22 countries.

Gender

20. In October 2006, the UNDG reviewed and made recommendations to improve the gender equality accountability mechanisms of UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and the International Labour Organization. The review examined key strategy documents (such as the multi-year funding framework (MYFF) and reports to the respective Executive Boards and to the Economic and Social Council) to analyse the extent to which these documents included gender-related targets and indicators. The study also analysed reporting, evaluation and audit functions; staff performance appraisal; and development and budget functions. The review included an analysis of a number of indicator systems and scorecards on gender equality and other areas.

21. UNDP and UNFPA have played important roles in the UNDG and at the national level on gender mainstreaming, as individual entities and in the context of the resident coordinator system. UNDP facilitated the first-ever United Nations country team harmonized reporting on the status of the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to the thirty-sixth session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in August 2006.

22. UNDP has responded positively to the findings and recommendations of the 2005 independent evaluation of gender mainstreaming in UNDP. The findings and recommendations are included in the corporate gender action plan, 2006-2007, which the Executive Board endorsed at its first regular session 2006. The gender action plan responds to the four "Cs", which are the main concerns of the evaluation: (a) commitment and accountability; (b) capacity; (c) communication and visibility; and (d) core resources. UNDP relies on the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), its associated fund, for technical services in areas where UNIFEM has expertise and capacity, especially at the regional level.

23. Through its corporate strategy, UNFPA also seeks to build a stronger internal accountability system and to enhance its capacity to improve programming on gender mainstreaming. In collaboration with UNIFEM, UNFPA developed capacity-building tools on gender budgeting for reproductive rights and other gender-related priorities, to ensure that sufficient budget allocations are available to implement national gender-equality policies and programmes.

24. In 2006, UNFPA responded to emerging issues such as international migration, focusing on female migrants and gender-based violence, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

25. Because women's leadership is critical to advancing reproductive rights, UNFPA continues to support women's networks, including women parliamentarians, women's rights groups and indigenous people's movements to implement the recommendations of the ten-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action. UNFPA is also one of the founding members of a global initiative, the Women Leaders Intercultural Forum, which brings together women leaders to advance the role of women in promoting intercultural understanding and fosters inter-generational partnerships to groom young women leaders.

South-South cooperation

26. Following Executive Board endorsement of the third UNDP cooperation framework for South-South cooperation, 2005-2007, UNDP has worked to promote South-South cooperation throughout the United Nations system. An analysis of data on South-South cooperation submitted by country offices suggests that in Africa, South-South cooperation is most prominent in efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and to support democratic governance. In the Asia and the Pacific region, it is most prominent in crisis prevention and recovery, and in energy and the environment. In Latin America, the priority areas for South-South cooperation are in crisis prevention and recovery, and in support to democratic governance.

27. UNDP has supported the development of partnerships and other mechanisms that bring together southern centres of excellence, the private sector and civil society organizations, in order to foster the implementation of South-South action plans in priority areas such as science capacity-building, technology transfer, remittances and creative industries. UNDP is developing a programme that links technology exchange centres in middle-income countries with their counterparts in poorer countries, particularly in Africa. UNDP is also supporting the sharing of southern development knowledge and increasing the visibility of southern experts and institutions throughout UNDP and in the UNDG office through the use of its internet-based information system, the Web of Information for Development, known as WIDE.

28. In response to the 2004 tsunami, UNDP launched a South-South grants facility that enables countries to pool resources to quickly fund short-term, community-based recovery efforts. Brazil, India and South Africa have established a fund in UNDP that supports efforts to meet the Millennium Development Goals. The Second South Summit (Doha, June 2005) established the South Fund for Development and Humanitarian Assistance.

29. UNFPA is committed to South-South cooperation within the framework of capacity development, in accordance with the UNDG position statement. In line with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of the other major United Nations conferences and summits, including the 2005 World Summit, UNFPA work in South-South cooperation in 2005 and 2006 has supported the development of census and population surveys, the planning and delivery capacity for reproductive health services, women's empowerment and the application of a 'culture lens' to national population programmes.

30. Four patterns of population assistance within South-South cooperation activities are discernible. The first pattern relates to bilateral support for countries in similar stages of development, within the same region or subregion. Often taking the form of study tours, this type of South-South activity has been implemented in African countries, particularly in West Africa, and to a lesser extent in East Africa, as well as in South Asia and South-East Asia. The second pattern relies on regional 'pivot' countries that have region-specific experience in planning and delivering population programmes, and that provide technical assistance to other countries in the region and subregion. Brazil, Egypt, India, Senegal, Thailand and Tunisia often provide this type of technical assistance. Also noteworthy are the recently established reproductive health networks in East Africa and in West Africa, and the Mediterranean network on gender-based violence.

31. The third pattern of South-South cooperation involves countries such as Brazil, China and India that provide support beyond their regions in research and analysis, training and the development of new products. Finally, there are South-South cooperation modalities that are culture-centred, including those among Muslim countries that support each other's efforts to foster commitment to a rights-based approach to reproductive health service delivery and gender equality.

Transition from relief to development

32. In order to strengthen coordination arrangements for transitions from relief to development, the UNDG and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) have jointly reviewed coordination practices in the recovery phase of crises or disasters and have established joint modalities to provide transition support. As in the tsunami-affected regions, the United Nations has established joint United Nations offices or offices of the resident coordinator/humanitarian coordinator in Pakistan, Sudan and other countries. UNDP has assisted United Nations country teams in preparing draft transitional strategies that delineate United Nations support for recovery and reconstruction plans, such as those in Lebanon and Pakistan. OCHA has agreed to permit UNDP and other United Nations organizations to include early recovery activities and resource requirements for recovery coordination in the consolidated appeals processes.

33. UNDP continued to develop modalities for joint programming with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations in areas such as disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, and the rule of law. In 2006, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNDP jointly established the first post-peacekeeping United Nations integrated office – in Sierra Leone – which is designed to ensure the most effective return to development in a post-crisis situation. The United Nations will establish a similar office in Burundi in 2007.

34. As the lead agency for the early recovery cluster in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee for Humanitarian Affairs, UNDP leads efforts to strengthen the capacity of United Nations resident coordinators/humanitarian coordinators to initiate early recovery activities. OCHA put into practice the cluster approach, which involves multi-agency collaboration, in the aftermath of the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan. This approach is viewed as the way forward.

Evaluation of operational activities for development

35. The new UNDP evaluation policy that the Executive Board approved at its annual session 2006 seeks to establish a common institutional basis for the UNDP evaluation function, thereby increasing the transparency, coherence and efficiency of evaluation in generating and using evaluative knowledge for organizational learning and in supporting accountability. The policy affirms the UNDP commitment to human development and human rights, national ownership and managing for development results.

36. UNDP is the chair of the United Nations evaluation group that brings together the professional units and individuals responsible for evaluation within the United Nations system. Through the United Nations evaluation group, UNDP has taken the lead in the first country-led, country-level joint evaluation with the Government of South Africa, seeking to evaluate the relevance and effectiveness of the United Nations system in South Africa over the past decade. It is also leading the study on ways to evaluate the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

37. In 2006, the UNDP Evaluation Office published six evaluations of country-level assessments of development results in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Honduras, Montenegro, Serbia and Syria. UNDP will complete five more evaluations by the end of 2006. In addition, UNDP completed two strategic evaluations on gender mainstreaming in UNDP and on the UNDP role in and contribution to the HIV/AIDS response in Ethiopia and in Southern Africa. In 2006, UNDP will complete five more strategic evaluations on a range of activities, including UNDP work in conflict-affected countries, governance-policy linkages and the national human development report system.

38. In September 2005, UNFPA conducted – for technical advisers, UNFPA representatives and other programme staff in West Africa – a subregional dialogue on results-based monitoring and evaluation in the context of United Nations reform. This resulted in a medium-term action plan to strengthen results-based monitoring and evaluation in country offices and among national counterparts. In 2006, UNFPA focused on the performance assessment of offices through oversight missions undertaken by evaluators and auditors. UNFPA assessed the performance of eight country offices, one UNFPA Country Technical Services Team and the Humanitarian Response Unit at headquarters on the relevance of UNFPA assistance and quality issues related to monitoring and evaluation systems.

39. UNFPA presented to the annual session 2006 of the Executive Board the results of its evaluation of quality assessment, conducted in 2005. UNFPA developed a follow-up action plan that included updating the programme policies and procedures manual, developing additional guidance, such as a new set of minimum evaluation standards, and improving the linkage between evaluation and knowledge sharing.

B. Follow-up to international conferences and the Millennium Development Goals

40. A key focus for UNFPA and UNDP in 2006 was to continue consultations in the UNDG and in the United Nations country teams to promote United Nations reform as outlined in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. The emphasis is on achieving 'one United Nations' as a way to enhance programme results and accountability and to promote capacity development and ownership of national development strategies to achieve the international development goals. The UNDG is currently implementing its 2006-2008 action plan on the follow-up to the 2005 World Summit. The plan addresses the scaling up of actions and results to help countries achieve the Millennium Development Goals, to reduce risks and to preserve the results achieved thus far.

41. UNDP, in partnership with the UNDG, United Nations organizations, the Bretton Woods institutions and other development partners, has launched a Millennium Development Goal support initiative to assist countries in preparing Millennium Development Goal-based national development strategies. The initiative has three dimensions: (a) Millennium Development Goal diagnostics and investment planning; (b) widening policy options; and (c) strengthening national capacities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. While the primary focus is on Africa, the initiative will also be rolled out in priority countries in other regions. By 2007, the initiative is expected to cover 60 countries.

42. During the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, UNFPA successfully advocated and supported the commitment to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015 and to strengthen policy and programme linkages between HIV/AIDS and reproductive health in resolution 50/2 on women, the girl child and HIV/AIDS. In May/June 2006, UNFPA participated in the High-level Meeting on AIDS and in the comprehensive review of the progress achieved in realizing the targets set out in the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, which the General Assembly adopted at its twenty-sixth special session in June 2001. UNFPA inputs in the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted at the meeting stressed the linkages between HIV/AIDS and reproductive health.

43. In August 2006, the Ad Hoc Committee on a Comprehensive and Integral International Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights and Dignity of Persons with Disabilities included, as advocated by UNFPA, sexual and reproductive health in the draft International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the first time this issue had been included in an international human rights instrument.

44. Maternal heath remains a priority pillar for UNFPA. In cooperation with the Government of Belgium and the European Commission, UNFPA organized the International Symposium on Sexual Violence in Conflict and Beyond (Brussels, 21-23 June 2006). The UNFPA Campaign to End Fistula is now active in 35 countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Arab region – a remarkable achievement in a short time. In September 2006, in Maputo, Mozambique, UNFPA, along with the Government of Mozambique, the African Union and the European Commission, supported the special session of the African Union Ministers of Health, which focused on scaling up sexual and reproductive health services throughout Africa to achieve the goal of universal access to reproductive health. UNFPA released its 2006 *State of World Population* report, which focused on women and international migration, and its special youth edition, *Moving Young*, to coincide with the General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in September 2006. Both publications contributed to raising awareness and building global consensus on the women-and-youth dimensions of the problem.

45. UNFPA continues to strengthen partnerships with civil society organizations, both globally and at the country level, to implement the international development goals. UNFPA has supported the participation of its non-governmental organization (NGO) partners in various civil society hearings in the General Assembly. The 2006 global consultation between NGOs and UNFPA served as a mechanism to exchange information and strengthen communications on emerging ICPD issues. Partnerships with civil society focus on knowledge sharing and capacity-building at local, national and global levels. The UNDG is currently promoting two initiatives as a follow-up to the Report of the Secretary-General in response to the report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations (A/59/354). These initiatives, which UNFPA supports, include the identification by all United Nations country teams of civil society focal points and the creation of a trust fund to strengthen partnerships with civil society at the country level.

II. UNDP section

A. Implementation of the reform programme of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review

Funding for operational activities for development of the United Nations system

46. Total UNDP resources reached $4.8 billion in 2005, up from $4.1 billion in 2004. This represents an increase in nominal terms of $700 million or 17 per cent over 2004. When adjusted for price changes and exchange rate fluctuations, the real increase is about $460 million or 11 per cent. UNDP regular resources increased for the fifth consecutive year after reversing their six-year downward trend in 2001. Compared to 2004, income to regular resources grew nominally by 10 per cent to $921 million or by approximately 7 per cent in real terms. For the first time in a decade, gross regular resources surpassed the level of $900 million and thus exceeded the 2004-2007 UNDP MYFF interim target set for 2005. Thirteen members of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) increased their core contributions in local currency terms to UNDP regular resources – four by more than 10 per cent and three by 20 per cent or more in nominal terms.

47. This level of contributions is consistent with the objectives set forth in the 2004-2007 UNDP MYFF. It also signals renewed support from Member States for a United Nations development arm that benefits from adequate and predictable funding. However, UNDP continues to rely heavily on a limited number of donors. The top ten donors provided about 82 per cent of regular resources in 2005. While regular resources income remained volatile with respect to exchange rate fluctuations, adherence to multi-year funding mechanisms is enhancing income predictability. Nine members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee have made multi-year contribution commitments.

48. Other (non-core) resources experienced a higher growth than regular resources in 2005. Non-core or earmarked contributions from bilateral donor governments slightly exceeded $1 billion. Nearly all OECD Development Assistance Committee donors are active in co-financing UNDP programmes. Non-core resources entrusted to UNDP by non-bilateral partners, such as the European Commission, the World Bank and the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria exceeded $1.4 billion. Local resources, channelled through UNDP by programme country governments and other local partners to support their own national development, amounted to $1.1 billion. As aid mechanisms available at the country level diversify and multiply, UNDP is increasingly being called upon to support governments in obtaining, directing and managing different types of funding in accordance with national priorities.

Crisis prevention and recovery

49. Through the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, UNDP supports Member States in: (a) achieving a peaceful and lasting management of conflicts and disputes, before the emergence of violence; (b) reducing risks posed by natural disasters; (c) achieving lasting recovery from violent conflict; and (d) achieving swift recovery from the impact of natural disasters. To better accomplish this, the Bureau designed a five-year strategy for the period 2007-2011, following extensive consultations with development partners. A key element of this strategy is the active promotion of women as central partners in crisis prevention and recovery efforts.

Conflict prevention

50. In order to assist Member States in building their capacity to manage conflicts, UNDP provided assistance in four areas in 2005-2006:

(a) Mainstreaming conflict analysis into development plans and programmes. Burundi, Colombia, Fiji and Indonesia have received such support.

(b) Building indigenous mediation capacity through credible modern and traditional governmental and civil society institutions and processes. Beneficiaries include the ethnic relations commission in Guyana, the political parties' registration commission in Sierra Leone, the newly established national peace council in Ghana and similar initiatives in Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

(c) Building consensus on divisive social and economic issues. UNDP provided support for national and civic dialogue initiatives in Argentina, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guyana, Lesotho, Mauritania and Togo, among others.

(d) Building an infrastructure for peace within which local disputes over land, resources, religion or ethnicity, chieftaincy succession and elections can be identified and addressed before they lead to violent conflict. In this regard, UNDP has supported initiatives in Ghana, Guyana, the Niger Delta, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

51. In 2005 and 2006, UNDP continued to provide much of this assistance: (a) in collaboration with other United Nations system partners, especially with the Departments of Political Affairs and Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations; and (b) in the context of systematic efforts to strengthen the United Nations Interdepartmental Framework for Coordination on Early Warning and Preventive Action, an internal United Nations mechanism to coordinate preventive action.

Post-conflict recovery

52. UNDP support for post-conflict recovery focuses on early recovery and on longer-term post-conflict peacebuilding. In 2005 and 2006, UNDP supported Member States in the following areas:

(a) Transitional recovery. UNDP implemented systematic and large-scale efforts to generate economic livelihoods and opportunities for communities, especially for internally displaced persons and refugees, in the following countries: Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti, Indonesia, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Uganda. UNDP also supported an innovative joint effort by Colombia and Ecuador to address the needs of conflict-affected communities along their shared border.

(b) Security sector reform and transitional justice. UNDP supported: (i) access to justice, especially for rural communities, in Haiti, Sierra Leone and Sudan; (ii) the reform and strengthening of the penal system in Haiti and Sierra Leone; (iii) multi-stakeholder dialogues on the reform of the security sector in Haiti and Sudan, and on transitional justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and (iv) the strengthening of police capabilities for conflict management and community policing in Albania and Sierra Leone.

(c) Small arms reduction, disarmament and demobilization. UNDP efforts targeted the perceptions of insecurity and the factors that fuel the demand for weapons. Beneficiaries of UNDP support in 2005-2006 included Afghanistan, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Haiti, Liberia and Sudan.

(d) Mine action. UNDP has placed particular emphasis on developing joint methods with other United Nations partners, especially the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, for mine action in post-conflict situations. The joint mine action centre established in Sudan is an important example. In 2005-2006, UNDP provided technical and advisory services to more than 30 mine-affected countries. A central focus of UNDP support has been to strengthen South-South cooperation on this issue, including through the mine action exchange programme.

(e) Special initiatives for countries in transition. In 2006, UNDP took systematic steps to strengthen its 'surge' capacity – the ability to rapidly support its country offices in providing prompt and effective responses to early recovery needs.

Natural disaster risk reduction

53. UNDP recently launched a global initiative to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development programming. The initiative focuses on producing tools and increasing programme capacities to include disaster concerns in United Nations as well as UNDP development planning processes. Recognizing the importance of regional and subregional collaboration in reducing disaster risks, UNDP launched programmes in Africa, the Caribbean and Central Asia in 2005 and 2006 to assist regional organizations and to develop regional frameworks, in order to better address risks such as droughts and hurricanes.

Natural disaster recovery

54. In addition to coordinating and directly implementing important aspects of the international response to the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, UNDP continued to provide support in 2005 and 2006 to the tsunami-affected countries, especially Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The international community has recognized the need for more comprehensive and predictable approaches in post-disaster recovery. To address this need, UNDP, with the support of Japan and other partners, launched in 2005 the International Recovery Platform to increase global capacity for post-disaster recovery planning.

B. Strategic partnerships, including cooperation with the World Bank

55. UNDP has worked extensively with United Nations partner organizations to strengthen existing partnerships and to develop new ones. UNDP continues to work closely with the World Bank on a wide range of issues. In 2006, UNDP and the World Bank set up a joint task force on scaling up support for the Millennium Development Goals as a basis for future collaborative work. The task force produced a paper and an agenda for action at the third meeting of the OECD Development Assistance Committee and the World Bank on scaling up for results (June 2006). UNDP continues to widen and strengthen its partnerships with the private sector, civil society and foundations.

III. UNFPA section

A. Implementation of the reform programme of the Secretary-General and the provisions of the triennial comprehensive policy review

Funding for operational activities for development of the United Nations system

56. In 2006, regular resources are expected to reach $360 million, a 3 per cent increase compared to 2005. This growth is due primarily to increases in local currency pledges from Australia, Austria, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Spain and Sweden. As of 1 September 2006, 140 countries had contributed $215.4 million to regular resources. In 2005, 172 countries made pledges to UNFPA; a similar number is expected for 2006. UNFPA has received 64 multi-year pledges so far, up from 55 in 2005.

57. In 2005, income to other resources was provided through co-financing arrangements ($157.7 million) and other arrangements ($36.1 million), including the junior professional officer programme and third-party procurement services. Co-financing projections for 2006 so far indicate a lower income compared to 2005, which included generous contributions in response to the 2004 tsunami and the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan.

Country-level capacity of the United Nations system and regional support

58. As reported last year, UNFPA is pursuing its regionalization strategy in the context of United Nations reform efforts. UNFPA believes that this process offers an opportunity to further strengthen the capacity of country offices to support the needs of programme countries. The UNFPA Technical Advisory Programme continues to support capacity-building at country and regional levels and has been instrumental in supporting country office implementation of United Nations reform processes.

B. Strategic partnerships, including cooperation with the World Bank

59. UNFPA collaborates closely with the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNIFEM within the framework of the UNFPA strategic partnerships programme. The aim of the strategic partnerships programme is to provide coordinated technical assistance to countries in priority areas. UNFPA works with WHO to improve sexual and reproductive health through the adoption of evidence-based guidelines that are updated regularly to reflect international scientific consensus. In June 2006, UNFPA and WHO issued a joint communiqué that identified a number of priority areas for cooperation in sexual and reproductive health. With UNIFEM, the initial aim is to strengthen national capacity in gender-responsive budgeting.

60. Over the past months, UNFPA and the World Bank have revived the World Bank-UNFPA joint action plan and have identified concrete steps and areas of collaboration. To strengthen this collaboration, UNFPA has published an action guide on contributing to national poverty reduction strategies and is planning to organize a workshop with the World Bank on how to mainstream youth issues into poverty reduction strategies.

IV. Joint UNDP/UNFPA recommendation

61. The Executive Board may wish to take note of this report (E/2007/5) and transmit it to the Economic and Social Council, together with the comments and guidance provided by delegations at the present session.

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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: reports of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme

United Nations Children's Fund
Executive Board
First regular session 2007
16-19 and 22 January 2007
Item 3 of the provisional agenda**

Annual report to the Economic and Social Council***

Summary

The present report, which is prepared annually, covers a range of issues arising from the decisions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, and provides the perspective of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on these topics of system-wide interest. It describes UNICEF actions to contribute to the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and to respond to the outcome of the 2005 World Summit. It provides information about the direction UNICEF is taking to work in closer partnership with other members of the United Nations system to ensure that development assistance produces sustainable results for children.

This report, together with an addendum containing the comments made by the members of the Executive Board during its first regular session of 2007, will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its substantive session of 2007.

* E/2007/100 (to be issued).
** E/ICEF/2007/1.
*** This document was submitted late because of internal consultations.

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I. Introduction

1. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals will only be possible with special efforts to reach the 49 per cent of the developing world's population who are children. UNICEF took numerous steps in 2006 to ensure that this will happen, by putting more emphasis on partnerships; by increasingly integrating its programmes; and by working more effectively and efficiently, especially through harmonized work with other parts of the United Nations. Such strategic, inclusive approaches are the path to measurable and sustainable results.

Partnerships

2. The scope of the Millennium Development Goals and its related targets is so great that one of the most critical roles of UNICEF is to deepen its alliances with others whose work will affect children, and to engage other collaborators for children both in the field and in policy dialogues.

3. New partnerships were created to "Unite for Children" and ongoing partnerships were deepened and broadened. UNICEF continues to work with, contribute to and provide leadership in major global organizations and coalitions that share a focus on children, including the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization; the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria; Roll Back Malaria; Health Metric Network; the Partnership on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health; and the United Nations Girls' Education Initiative. To address the needs of 146 million undernourished children under five years of age, UNICEF and the World Food Programme (WFP) have collaborated with the World Bank, the United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition and other partners in shaping the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative, which focuses on Millennium Development Goal 1, to halve by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger and undernutrition. The Executive Director also participated in the Clinton Global Initiative and in the World Economic Forum in Davos, joining with others to place the concerns of children in the centre of the global agenda.

4. In the area of sports, the Executive Director initiated the "Unite for Children, Unite for Peace" campaign with the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) at the opening of the World Cup in June 2006. This campaign took advantage of a global spotlight on sports to promote nonviolence, tolerance and peace for children and for all. In addition, at the second regular session of the Executive Board in September, Fútbol Club Barcelona expanded its philanthropic tradition to address the problems of children affected by HIV/AIDS. And in the United States, the National Basketball Association launched a public service campaign in support of "Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS", which was launched in 2005 with participation of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AID and other United Nations agencies.

5. Partnerships with children and young people continue to be an important means for UNICEF and other agencies to include the most direct and most immediate perspectives on programme directions. At the "Junior 8" youth forum held in conjunction with the G8 Summit in July in Saint Petersburg, the Executive Director interacted with youth delegates from the eight member countries, who then presented their recommendations to the G8 leaders. Another major process during the year depended greatly on young people's involvement and perspectives. The

United Nation Study on Violence against Children, supported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Save the Children Foundation, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, reached out to children who had experienced violence through nine regional forums. Children contributed their insights and participated in the preparation of recommendations for the study. In addition, children and young people — helped by Save the Children — played a large part in producing a special children's version of the report and an educational booklet designed to provide children and young people over the age of 12 years with information about violence and ideas for actions they can take to prevent and respond to violence. It is clear that this innovative involvement of children throughout, from preparation to published materials, contributed to the success and usefulness of the study.

Greater programme integration

6. Another UNICEF strategy for increasing the effectiveness of its programmes to reach the Millennium Development Goals involves greater integration of programmes so that results are mutually reinforcing. In West Africa, UNICEF is scaling up a community-based programme known as the Accelerated Child Survival and Development (ACSD) programme, which combines high-impact health and nutrition interventions and which has resulted in significant decreases in pilot districts of as much as 20 per cent in child mortality in only two years. UNICEF will use this model for results-driven strategies in other sectors and regions, and is sharing it widely with other partners.

7. Over the course of the year, UNICEF also continued to strengthen its partnerships within, and to harmonize its work processes with, other parts of the United Nations system. Many of these results are detailed in the following sections.

A. Funding for operational activities for development of the United Nations system

8. The seventh pledging event in the context of the multi-year funding framework took place in January 2006. Details were provided in the annual report to the Executive Board, presented at the annual session of 2006 (E/ICEF/2006/11).

9. For the current year, as of 30 September 2006, UNICEF had recorded regular resources income of $452.5 million from government donors and intergovernmental agencies against medium-term financial plan projections of $488 million. Total regular resources income from all sources for 2006 is projected to be $962 million, with the level of government regular resources contributions in line with financial plan estimates. Other resources contributions recorded from Governments were $886 million. Of this, $614 million went to other resources-regular against a financial plan of $581 million, while $272 million went to other resources-emergency against a financial plan of $394 million. Total other resources income from all sources was $1,338 million, against the 2006 plan target of $1,403 million.

10. UNICEF requires a predictable, long-term and increased base of core resources to enhance effectiveness and to better engage partner countries in capacity development, technical advice and a normative agenda in a systematic and responsive manner. UNICEF encourages all Member States to increase their annual voluntary contributions to core resources and, for those in a position to do so, to

provide multi-year commitments and payment schedules at the pledging event held at the first regular session of the Executive Board.

B. Capacity-building

11. National capacity development continues to be a key focus of UNICEF cooperation. In a trend that is continuing as part of the 2006-2009 medium-term strategic plan (MTSP), the organization is making a gradual and relative shift from an approach that is based mainly on support to project implementation to one that is more strategic, policy-oriented and focused on support to national programmes and partner institutions, including strengthening their systems and capacities to scale up basic service delivery.

12. One of the major areas in which UNICEF has engaged in capacity-building is through technical and financial support provided to the implementation of national-level household surveys, especially the multiple indicator cluster surveys (MICS). The MICS have become the single most important source of data for monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, as they provide data on more than half of the indicators for the Goals. MICS currently are being conducted in 54 countries.

13. To meet the increased demand for data at more frequent intervals, MICS will be conducted every three years rather than every five years. This will provide a solid and more up-to-date statistical base for national partners to use to improve their programme planning and policy formulation. The data derived from MICS are a critically important source of information for both national and global tracking of progress toward a range of international goals and targets, including the forthcoming assessment of progress towards the goals established by the General Assembly Special Session On Children, entitled *A World Fit for Children*, in September 2007, as well as the Abuja Targets on malaria, and the General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS. In this way, more frequent surveys will lead to more accurate planning, more effective programming and, therefore, to measurable results for children.

14. In 2006, a new version of *DevInfo* was released with UNICEF support. This new version operates both as a desktop application and on the internet. To support users of this new version, since May 2006 workshops are under way to reach professionals from United Nations agencies, government statistical offices, academic institutions and non-governmental organizations, representing 120 countries. Eighty countries have now adopted the *DevInfo* technology to support their national socio-economic database.

15. Urban Info, a customized version of *DevInfo* developed by the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), was launched at the World Urban Forum in June 2006. Another *DevInfo* adaptation, Millennium Development Goals Info 2006, was presented at the General Assembly in September 2006. It contains the official Millennium Development Goals data set published by the United Nations Statistics Division in coordination with all other United Nations agencies. Since September 2006, the United Nations System Avian Influenza Coordinator's office has adopted the *DevInfo* database system to monitor the global situation of the H5N1 virus. The system will help with quick and efficient data collection and support both global and national teams to formulate effective preparedness and response plans to the virus.

16. EmergencyInfo, a powerful decision support system based on *DevInfo* database technology, was developed with UNICEF support to bridge information gaps within the first days of an emergency and provide support for rapid data collection, situation assessment, standard monitoring reports and disaster preparedness. By combining the advanced data access and presentation features of *DevInfo* and making it accessible on handheld digital devices, it will help humanitarian agencies to respond faster and more accurately in emergencies.

17. A new enhanced website (www.devinfo.org) offers access to information about *DevInfo* implementation and provides a forum for the global sharing of experiences in the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals using this technology.

18. UNICEF has also supported thematic south-south cooperation. This has been especially important over the course of the past year in the area of HIV and AIDS. Brazil, for example, has reached out to Bolivia, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Paraguay, San Tome and Principe and Timor-Leste to expand care and support to children, adolescents and pregnant women affected by HIV/AIDS as well as other sexually transmitted diseases. Among the main outputs for this cooperation have been the sharing of experiences, supplies of antiretroviral drugs and test kits, and capacity-building for health professionals.

C. Transaction costs and efficiency

19. In the area of financial management, reforms made over the past three years have created new efficiencies. The benefits of other work now in progress will be available in the near future. All of these efforts are being done in close collaboration with other funds, programmes and agencies.

20. The integrated enterprise resource planning system implemented in 1999 has continued to bring new efficiencies in the areas of financial management, with benefits at the headquarters and field levels and for donors, development partners and staff. There is a seamless system for financial transactions from New York to the smallest field office, which is updated every 10 hours and handles more than 10 million transactions per year from 234 sites and in 147 currencies. With this system, UNICEF operationally closed its financial books of accounts for 2005 by the end of January 2006, four months earlier than the previous biennium and the earliest it has ever been done. As a result, accurate financial reports to government partners and donors were generated from early February with a ripple effect of efficiencies. Concomitant with this, field offices now have increased authority in the area of payments to partners and in administering their support budgets.

21. In the area of human resources administration, including payroll, the SAP human resources module has been in place since mid-2005. This system is now being extended to regional offices, including any co-located country offices, enabling more rapid and accurate input of data.

22. In 2006, UNICEF harmonized its cost-recovery policies with those of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) members, making it much easier for partners, both donors and programme countries, to plan programmes and encourage partnerships. The harmonization of other financial practices among the funds and programmes has accelerated, with benefits for all parts of the system and for partners. The harmonized approach to cash transfers has now been launched and a

simplified means of transferring funds to partners is now available to all UNICEF field offices. A roll-out of this harmonized policy by the United Nations country team (UNCT) members is under way.

23. Discussions are under way among the funds and programmes in a number of other areas. Now that basic financial reporting has been harmonized, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF are looking at revising the presentations of their biennial support budgets in a results-based format. When this is done, all of the UNICEF budget will be results-based, as 85 per cent of the UNICEF budget is already results-based with a results framework in the country programmes linked to the focus areas of the MTSP and national priorities based on the Millennium agenda. In addition, the Comptrollers of the United Nations, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP are discussing the creation of one standard set of Financial Rules and Regulations. This will facilitate the adoption in 2010 of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), for which work is well under way to ensure shared interpretations and strategies. The adoption of IPSAS will further strengthen a coherent approach in financial management throughout the United Nations.

24. The first United Nations joint office has been established in Cape Verde, and the UNDG Executive Committee agencies currently are undertaking a review to identify its benefits, including any demonstrated efficiencies in administration, management and programme effectiveness, which have been brought about by the common country programme. UNICEF continues, with the other funds and programmes, to work for common premises by regularly reviewing proposed and active shared premises. UNICEF also works closely with a network of United Nations organizations to increase efficiencies in administrative procedures, finding areas for common services. One example is harmonizing travel processes and procedures, where UNICEF has taken steps to simplify its procedures in ways that conform with best practices in other agencies.

D. Coherence, effectiveness and relevance of operational activities for development

25. The report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence had just been issued at the time of finalization of the present report. UNICEF was engaged in the discussions held by the Panel, both bilaterally and as part of the consultations organized in various locations. It is clear that the directions expected to be proposed by the Panel are consistent with the work already being carried out as part of the ongoing reforms of the UNDG, Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs (ECHA) and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination machinery, and the implementation of the previous triennial comprehensive policy review. UNICEF will continue to work in these areas and, pending decisions by the inter-agency and intergovernmental bodies on the implementation of reforms stemming from the Panel's report, will report to the Executive Board in accordance with the established mechanisms as well as any new ones that may be established.

26. The cost-recovery policy mentioned in paragraph 22 above is facilitating the ability of UNICEF to collaborate with partners, including through participation in joint United Nations programmes. These programmes are now done in the context of

United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). Thirty-eight UNDAFs were completed in 2006, bringing the total to date to 112. The guidelines for Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and UNDAFs have now been used for four years, and the circulation of experienced senior staff and improved training have helped country teams use these instruments more effectively for their planning. One measure of this is that UNDAFs are increasingly commonly directly related to national development plans, including poverty reduction strategies (PRSs).

27. Originally, the UNDAF was to be based on the needs identified by the CCA, but there has been an increase in nationally-produced analyses, usually associated with a PRS. Therefore, the requirement for a CCA has evolved and in some cases, country teams and national partners have agreed that a separate CCA would be duplicative. This trend needs to be monitored to ensure that the national analysis adequately covers such areas of concern as human rights and child protection. UNCTs are also involved in Joint Assistance Strategies, which integrate the support strategies of all (signatory) donors and agencies, in countries where they have been developed, including Ghana, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

28. An evaluation of the role and quality of UNDAFs carried out for the UNDG during 2006 concluded that UNDAFs have become more focused over the past years, that the United Nations in the field is now better aligned with national processes and that UNDAFs have strengthened the United Nations' collective identity and team-building. At the same time, the transaction costs of the UNDAF process are still high. The United Nations is not yet fully reflecting new aid modalities in its work and there is scope for the United Nations to better exploit its comparative advantage in programming. The current revision of the CCA/UNDAF guidelines is taking these findings into account.

29. The planning of country programmes involves the preparation and approval of cumulative documentation from the CCA (in most cases), the UNDAF and, based on the UNDAF and for each agency, a country programme document (CPD) for approval by the Executive Board and a country programme action plan (CPAP). In order to streamline this process, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP prepared a common proposal that was initially presented to the UNICEF Executive Board at the annual session in June. The proposal was that one single document be prepared which would incorporate elements of the CCA, UNDAF, CPD and CPAP. A portion of this would be presented to the Executive Boards for approval, as CPDs are currently. The proposals were not fully adopted by the respective Executive Boards. Efforts to streamline the planning process and increasing the coherence of United Nations programmes will continue in 2007.

30. The Regional Directors of the UNDG Executive Committee agencies and of other agencies and organizations have met with increasing frequency to support the ability of country teams as they cooperate with national partners to deliver development results. The Regional Directors' Team in Southern Africa, which was started to support UNCT responses to the "triple threat" of HIV, food insecurity and governance problems, has continued to mature. The team now covers both Southern and Eastern Africa and has a full Programme Support Group which coordinates responses to UNCT requests for support. The Latin America and Caribbean region also has a very active Regional Directors' Team that is supporting the development of CCAs and UNDAFs, resolving implementation issues and supporting the development of UNCTs. There is now agreement that a regional hub should be

established in Panama, to increase the ability of regional staff to support country teams. All Regional Directors' Teams were requested to make a joint assessment of the performance of Resident Coordinators in 2005. For some countries, a "180-degree assessment" tool was introduced on a pilot basis, through which the members of a UNCT provide an opinion of other UNCT members, including the Resident Coordinator. The assessment meetings have been frank, constructive and useful to the UNDP Regional Directors in making a more balanced report on Resident Coordinator performance to the chair of the UNDG.

31. UNICEF fully supports the enhancement of the role of the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator as an objective leader of a UNCT who speaks for the United Nations with one voice. As a result of strong encouragement from the Executive Director, an additional four UNICEF staff have been appointed as Resident Coordinators, bringing to nine the number of UNICEF staff who are currently serving as Resident Coordinators. An additional UNICEF staff member is serving as a deputy Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator. This brings to 18 the number of UNICEF staff who have ever served as Resident Coordinator, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General or deputy Resident Coordinators.

E. Evaluation of operational activities

32. As noted in last year's report, evaluations in the United Nations system are being strengthened by inter-agency collaboration. In this regard, a Tsunami Evaluation Coalition of 40 organizations, including the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, UNDP, UNICEF, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and WHO, has prepared a consolidated document which assessed the impact of the Indian Ocean tsunami on local and national capacities, the role of needs assessment, the coordination of international humanitarian assistance, the links between relief, rehabilitation and development, and the funding of the tsunami response. UNICEF was a member of the Coalition's core management group.

33. A Real-Time Evaluation Initiative is now under way to agree on an inter-agency approach for real-time evaluation of humanitarian actions. UNICEF has prepared a concept paper for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). The Horn of Africa (Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia) formed the first pilot case.

34. In the area of evaluation, UNICEF is taking steps to prepare for the 2007 triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development (TCPR). UNICEF is leading the task group of the United Nations Evaluation Group on country-led evaluation. A first pilot is under way in South Africa. The exercise consists in assessing from a country perspective the contribution of the United Nations and other external support. UNICEF, with UNDP, is co-leading an assessment of the quality of the current UNDAFs. The findings will be included in the TCPR report to be reviewed by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 2007.

35. UNICEF is gathering lessons and good practices from the ACSD programme through systematic weekly updates, regional network meetings, country annual reports and independent evaluations. The knowledge generated through these processes is used to formulate policies and update strategies in real time for ACSD.

UNICEF is also working to develop more general knowledge management strategies for widespread and decentralized application in UNICEF programmes. This will help to develop and document a strong evidence base to improve both implementation and policy advocacy in all programmes.

F. Gender mainstreaming

36. UNICEF continues to seek innovative approaches to reaching Millennium Development Goal 3, promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls, by infusing its programmes with a gender perspective as part of the human rights-based approach to programming. UNICEF is also taking steps to improve gender balance within the organization.

37. All country offices have been asked to undertake a gender self-assessment and review of UNICEF-assisted country programmes during the programme cycle, using the specific gender assessment tools available in the Programme Policy and Procedure Manual. UNICEF currently is conducting an organization-wide evaluation to assess implementation of the policy on gender equality and women's rights adopted in 1994 as well as implementation of General Assembly resolution 59/250 of 22 December 2004 on the TCPR.

38. UNICEF is an active member of the UNDG Task Team on Gender Equality, which aims to strengthen accountability for gender equality among UNCTs. As noted in this report last year, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and UNICEF conducted a study on the extent to which gender equality is reflected in the latest generation of CCA/UNDAFs. The review showed that the link between analysis and corresponding action and investment in gender equality remains weak, and noted that UNCTs have demonstrated insufficient capacity to undertake holistic, rights-based programming for gender equality and women's empowerment. The review proposed launching a process through which self-selected UNCTs would generate replicable means of undertaking rights-based, change-oriented programming to increase the capacity of government and civil society to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This process will be well-documented and best practices would be disseminated widely for adoption by other countries. This recommendation was endorsed in June 2006 by the Executive Heads of the UNDG Executive Committee and the initiative will be led by UNICEF and UNIFEM.

39. For many years, United Nations agencies have been presenting individual reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the status of implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in areas falling within the scope of their activities. The Committee has recently requested United Nations entities to explore means of enhancing the flow of information from the United Nations system to the Committee. As planned, UNICEF, in partnership with UNFPA, UNIFEM and WHO, presented a joint report to the Committee at its thirty-fourth session dealing with reproductive health and violence for four countries: Cambodia, Eritrea, Mali and Thailand. The report for Eritrea was prepared by the UNCT. This practice was subsequently expanded at the Committee's thirty-sixth session, at which another six reports were prepared by UNCTs, and will continue at the thirty-seventh session. The Committee expressed its appreciation for this coordinated and comprehensive

presentation of information. These are the first instances of UNCTs preparing a report to a treaty body and this precedent is under consideration as a best practice for adoption by other such bodies.

40. The Legislative Reform Initiative which UNICEF is conducting continues to produce programming tools to promote the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women through comprehensive, holistic and participatory legislative reforms, and the development of a rights-based legislative framework. UNICEF is also developing a handbook to serve as a reference on harmonizing national legislation with international instruments, particularly these two Conventions, to be used by legislators, parliamentarians, jurists, lawyers, judges, line ministries, government officials, human rights and children's rights advocates and policymakers.

41. UNICEF continues to work at national, provincial and community levels to prevent gender-based violence in conflict situations and to respond to the needs of survivors in emergency situations.

42. UNICEF has participated in the creation and dissemination of field guidelines and tools for implementation of existing policies, and has promoted inter-agency collaboration in addressing sexual and gender-based violence in emergencies. The IASC Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings are now ready for field testing.

43. UNICEF, as co-chair of the ECHA-Executive Committees on Peace and Security Working Group on Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by United Nations staff and related personnel, has finalized the drafting of the Secretary-General's Strategy on Victim Assistance, which is due for discussion by the General Assembly in 2007.

44. UNICEF is committed to attaining the United Nations system-wide goal of gender parity in staffing at all levels by 2010. The report of a study on gender imbalance in UNICEF, presented to the Global Management Team in January 2006, indicated that steady progress has been made and that UNICEF ranks among the top three United Nations agencies in terms of gender parity (46 per cent). However, gender imbalance at the senior levels has been quite persistent. The study concluded that gender parity can be achieved by 2010 if senior management takes a clear and accountable lead, models the desired management culture and invests in human resources management.

45. The Executive Director moved quickly to address these recommendations. She appointed a Special Adviser for Gender and Diversity to report on follow-up to the recommendations and attainment of the goals laid out in the report. She ensured that the steering committee and its reference group which support the comprehensive organizational review are gender balanced. She has established a policy that one half of all committee members should be women. She requested that the organizational review and the supporting strategic review of human resources management incorporate the findings of the gender report in their work.

46. Further progress has been seen in the implementation of the first-ever Senior Staff Review and Rotation Exercise, which was initiated by the Executive Director. Positive action was taken to increase the gender balance in senior management and

there was an increase in the number of female staff at the D-2 level from 19 per cent in 2005 to 30 per cent in September 2006.

47. The global action plan for implementation of the gender parity study is in place. It is derived from a strategy of policy commitment, qualitative and quantitative measurement, institutionalized human resources management procedures and an organizational culture of respect and accommodation. The plan proposes action in six key areas: recruitment; retention; talent development; work culture; accountability; and monitoring and reporting.

48. Managers will be accountable for the action plan. The Special Advisor, Gender and Diversity, supported by a review group, will be the advocate and link for monitoring the implementation of the plan and will report periodically on progress to the Global Management Team.

II. Follow-up to international conferences and panels

49. The commitments set out in the final document of the General Assembly Special Session on Children, entitled *A World Fit for Children*, are being implemented in the context of follow-up to other major international conferences and summits. Notable among them are the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the International Conference on Financing for Development, both held in 2002. The goals of *A World Fit for Children* are also firmly grounded in the resolutions of the 2005 World Summit and the 2006 High-Level Meeting on AIDS.

50. The four major goal areas of *A World Fit for Children* strongly reinforce the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. The building of a world fit for children would be a major step in fulfilling the commitments of the Millennium Summit of 2000.

51. Some 177 countries are now engaged in follow-up activities to the Special Session on Children which include incorporating the goals of *A World Fit for Children* into their planning processes, either by developing National Plans of Action on children's issues (NPAs) or by integrating the goals into mainstream national plans and/or PRSs. Several countries have used both mechanisms. In some countries, subnational follow-up has been a major focus of activity, including the development of provincial or local plans of action.

52. There is also increased attention to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The majority of NPAs make reference to the Convention or to the concluding observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the respective state party reports. Other human rights instruments, such as International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 138 concerning the minimum age for admission to employment and ILO Convention 182 concerning the prohibition and immediate action for the elimination of the worst forms of child labour, and the two optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, are also increasingly recognized as part of the framework for NPAs. Almost all the NPAs prepared since the Special Session anticipate the need to review national legislation in relation to the provisions of the Convention. A number also propose strategies to increase the attention given to the views of children.

53. A total of 47 countries had completed NPAs by end of 2005, an increase from 25 in 2003. In addition, 99 countries had incorporated the goals of *A World Fit for*

Children into national development plans and/or poverty reduction strategies by end of 2005, an increase from 68 in 2003. These goals are also explicitly targeted in sectoral plans of 90 countries.

54. At its fifty-eighth session, the General Assembly decided to convene a commemorative plenary meeting in 2007, devoted to the follow-up to the outcome and the progress made in implementing the Declaration and the Plan of Action, based on a report to be prepared by the Secretary-General. UNICEF was asked to prepare and disseminate information on the progress made in the implementation of the Plan of Action. UNICEF is now working closely with Governments to support their reviews of progress. Because they are so closely linked, national reporting may take the form of a distinct section of the national report on the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals. This work is taking place through local UNICEF offices, National Committees for UNICEF and UNCTs.

55. UNICEF actively participated in the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in 2006 and played a fundamental role in ensuring the visibility of the situation and rights of the girl child. As the Commission's fifty-first session in early 2007 will focus on the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against the girl child, UNICEF is a central partner of the Division of Advancement of Women in the preparations and will support participation from country offices and young people from all regions. UNICEF has worked closely with the Division, the NGO Committee on UNICEF, the Working Group on Girls and the Innocenti Research Centre in organizing the expert group meeting that will feed into the Secretary-General's report on the girl child to the Commission. The report of the expert group meeting is being translated into a youth-friendly version by UNICEF for discussion and sharing with young people.

Conclusion

56. A culture of continual improvement is being established at UNICEF, in harmony with the processes of United Nations reform. UNICEF has reached out to other partners, within and outside the United Nations system, more inclusively and more dynamically over the past year. Steps are being made in knowledge management so that best practices, programme data and evaluation results are shared and used for programme adaptations.

57. This is leading to more efficient and effective programming and advocacy for children, and to the creation of measurable results. This is essential to reaching the Millennium Development Goals and the provisions of the Millennium Declaration. In doing so, UNICEF is fully working in the spirit of cooperation and collaboration laid out by the TCPR by continuing to improve its effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and impact.

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Follow-up to the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

In compliance with resolution 60/2 of 6 October 2005, section I of the present report addresses the progress achieved and the constraints that young people face in relation to their participation in the global economy. The report also includes the identification of possible indicators to be used in assessing implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

Section II of the present report responds to Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/15, in which the Council requested a report on the progress achieved by the Youth Employment Network. It reviews the key achievements of the Network, discussing progress in lead countries and providing an update on the status of national action plans for youth employment in Member States.

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I. Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond: progress and constraints

A. Introduction

1. In its resolution 60/2 of 6 October 2005, the General Assembly took note of the three clusters of priority areas of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond presented in the report entitled "World Youth Report 2005",[1] and requested the Secretary-General to provide the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, through the Commission for Social Development at its forty-fifth session, with a comprehensive report on the implementation of one of the three clusters.

2. The present report presents a review of the progress made and the constraints that young people face in relation to their participation in the global economy. The World Programme of Action for Youth and follow-up General Assembly resolution 60/2 identified 15 priority areas of youth development that are key to the successful transition of youth to adulthood. These priority areas are grouped into three areas — youth in the global economy, youth in civil society, and youth and their well-being. Each cluster relates to different aspects of the development of young people. In view of the priority theme of the Commission for Social Development at its forty-fifth session on the theme "Promoting full employment and decent work for all", the present report focuses on the cluster "Youth in the global economy". This cluster includes not only employment, which is the specific focus of the forty-fifth session of the Commission for Social Development, but also covers globalization, poverty and hunger, and education, which are critical determinants of the availability of decent work and sustainable livelihoods for youth.

3. Resolution 60/2 also requested the Secretariat to establish, in collaboration with other relevant United Nations programmes and specialized agencies, a broad set of indicators related to youth for monitoring the situation of young people in relation to the World Programme of Action for Youth. Therefore, the report also identifies possible indicators to be used in assessing progress in addressing the goals of the World Programme of Action for Youth.

4. Section II of the present report responds to Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/15, in which the Council requested a report on the progress achieved by the Youth Employment Network. It updates and builds upon earlier reports of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on the Network, and therefore should be read in conjunction with the reports on promoting youth employment (A/58/229) and on the global analysis and evaluation of national action plans on youth employment (A/60/133).

B. Youth development in a globalizing world

5. In 2005, youth, defined as persons aged 15 to 24 years, accounted for nearly 18 per cent of the world population, and that group will expand by another

[1] A/60/61-E/2005/7.

31 million by 2015.[2] Owing to a combination of factors, youth today are better poised than ever before to participate in, and benefit from, global development. The majority of youth around the world is healthy, having survived childhood years, which only a few decades ago accounted for considerably higher infant and child mortality. Compared to previous generations, a higher proportion of young people today have completed primary schooling. Youth in many countries have the added advantage of increased access to the media and communication technologies. There is a growing interconnectivity among people across the world, nurturing the realization that the world is becoming — albeit slowly — a true global community. Youth are key links in this process. Furthermore, across the world, young people want to be included in local and global development as important and equal participants, rather than as passive bystanders unable to shape their own future.

6. Although the present cohort of youth has numerous advantages and assets, it also faces a complex and rapidly evolving economic and social environment where new opportunities coexist with major constraints and obstacles. In many ways, every market in the world is becoming more demanding, and increased competition is affecting the global marketplace and its rules and practices. Forces of globalization often impose constraints on national policies, and not every country has the means to manage its integration into the global economy and to provide its citizens with social and economic opportunities. Youth often remain in a vulnerable situation and lack the requisite knowledge and skills to adapt to a new economic and social environment. With an uneven distribution of economic growth across and within countries, youth are facing not only the traditional (largely domestic) barriers to their development, but they must also surmount new barriers associated with the changing global economy.

7. In the past two decades or so, Governments everywhere have made considerable strides to improve economic performance by promoting greater productivity, lowering or recovering costs and promoting private sector development. A thrust of these changes has been to improve access to the global market for goods, services and capital by lowering or removing barriers to international transactions. This process of liberalization of international trade and finance has been a major force in increasing the integration of the global economy. The opening up of international global markets has been associated with a wave of related forces that have affected social policy, giving rise to concerns about income distribution, inequality and social exclusion. As a result of liberalization, major changes have also occurred in the labour market. There is greater wage flexibility and less employment protection, and, in many instances, minimum wages have been eroded or have become less responsive to increases in productivity. These developments cannot but affect young people.

8. Whether on political, socio-economic or humanitarian grounds, issues such as hunger and poverty, lack of education, ill health, joblessness and social exclusion are attracting more and more attention worldwide. There is, however, a growing understanding that effective and forward-looking national social and economic policies are essential in addressing these challenges that citizens of many countries, including young people, are facing. A range of national policies, focusing on trade,

[2] See *World Population Prospects: The 2004 Revision* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.XIII.5), and United Nations, *World Urbanization Prospects: The 2003 Revision* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.04.XIII.6).

finance, knowledge, technology and investment, remains key to a country's beneficial integration in the global economy.[3] National policies and international cooperation that address poverty reduction, environmental sustainability and other social goals are also required.

9. In addressing the priority areas under the cluster, "Youth in the global economy", the report first highlights how youth have fared generally in the context of globalization. This leads into a discussion of progress with respect to poverty and hunger, education and employment. Although each priority area is examined separately, it is important to note the strong interrelationship among areas.

1. Globalization

10. Globalization is a complex phenomenon that offers many opportunities, but also poses many risks. It presents a major challenge to policymaking and implementation, both at the national and international levels. Globalization has increasingly transformed the global markets for goods, services and capital, and has introduced new ideas, knowledge and technology. This transformation has created enhanced opportunities for youth to participate in the global economy, especially in those countries that have been able to generate significantly new employment opportunities from investments and have prepared their young job-seekers for such opportunities; e.g. those associated with the adoption of new technologies. In addition to its strong links to employment, education and hunger and poverty, discussed in subsequent sections, globalization has expanded youth access to technology, especially information and communication technologies (ICT); it has also fuelled the flows of young migrants between and within countries in search of better opportunities.

11. With increasing flows of goods and services, a growing segment of youth now have access to essential consumer goods and services previously beyond their reach. Food, educational materials, clothing, medicines and information on political and social developments elsewhere in the world are quickly and easily transferred across borders. Unfortunately, globalization has also increased unemployment, as well as job flexibility and casualization, which have exacerbated the social exclusion of youth in many contexts. It has also provided youth around the world with easier access to goods and services that have encouraged consumerism, alienation and delinquency. For example, one aspect of globalization is the expanding global trade in illicit drugs and substances, which is tearing families and societies apart, spawning crime, spreading diseases such as AIDS, and killing youth and adults alike. It has been noted, for example, that deregulated and privatized markets have allowed the drug industry to spread its activities worldwide, opening new trafficking routes and production zones and infiltrating the "legal" economy to a degree that decision makers cannot ignore.[4] Even when they are not the main participants of this trade, youth are often the main targets of such trade promotion efforts.

12. Internet technologies increasingly serve as hubs for the communication and social networking of youth. These technologies are embedded into the lives of increasing numbers of youth every day. Internet use among young people across the

[3] See A/58/394.

[4] See United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), "The globalization of the drug trade", *Globalization of Drug Trade*, No. 111 (April, 1999), available at http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/00115833e.pdf.

world is high and rising and offers new opportunities for youth to harness benefits of globalization from outside national borders. Countries that are very different in socio-economic and cultural terms may have similar patterns of Internet use. For example, in Kuwait, where the Internet is used by 23 per cent of the population, 63 per cent of users are young people. In South Korea, the Internet use rate is 60.9 per cent, though among the age group under 24, the figure is 95.1 per cent.[5] But inequalities in this area persist. Although globalization has facilitated the global spread of technology, large numbers of the world's youth are on the wrong side of the digital divide, and are unable to access this technology.

13. The rapid and major transformation of the global market has had some significant social costs that are being felt, not only in countries that have been marginalized from the process of globalization, but also in countries that have been relatively successful in adjusting to it. Generating unbalanced outcomes, both between and within countries, forces of globalization compound the challenges that youth encounter in their transition to adulthood. Changes in economic structure, including those due to relocation of production, along with changes in consumption possibilities and patterns, have a direct impact on livelihoods and incomes of population groups, including youth.[6]

14. Globalization has had, and will continue to have, an impact on youth employment opportunities and migration patterns. Today, in developed countries, there is an average of 142 young entrants (ages 20-24) to the labour force for every 100 persons about to retire; in 10 years, there will be a deficit of young workers, with 87 young persons for every 100 who leave the labour force. In the developing world, the situation is in stark contrast: developing countries today have 342 young persons for every 100 persons aged 60 to 64. Though each region is confronting different issues, the absorption of a larger number of young workers is a global issue that will continue to fuel migration.[7]

15. With respect to the job market, the introduction of new technologies has had a profound impact on the structure of the economy and the labour market, affecting low-skilled jobs. Trade liberalization, and especially the relocation of production to countries where wages are lower, often has negative effects on unskilled workers who are the first to lose their jobs. Because of their limited experience and skills, youth often comprise a disproportionately large share of those displaced from their jobs as a result of globalization.[8] In many parts of the world, the rate of unemployment is rising due to the ongoing transformation from agriculture to the less employment-intensive manufacturing and service industries. Trade liberalization has forced companies to be more competitive, leading many to become increasingly dependent on low-cost and flexible labour arrangements.

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[5] See International Telecommunication Union, available at www.itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/at_glance/Internet04.pdf; Barbara Wheeler, "The Internet and Youth subculture in Kuwait", *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*, vol. 8, No. 92 (January, 2003); see also "World Internet project finds gaps between rich and poor, young and old, men and women", UCLA, available at www.international.ucla.edu/article.asp?parentid=7488.

[6] See World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, *A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities for All* (Geneva, International Labour Organization (ILO), 2004).

[7] See A/60/871.

[8] See Lance Taylor, "External liberalization, economic performance, and distribution in Latin America and elsewhere", *Inequality, Growth and Poverty in an Era of Liberalization and Globalization*, G. A. Cornia, ed. (Oxford. Oxford University Press, 2001).

National social protection schemes, in many instances, have failed to keep pace with new risks and vulnerabilities stemming from rapidly globalizing markets.

16. Migration offers youth an opportunity to capitalize on the benefits of globalization and to improve their well-being by moving to places where opportunities are perceived to be better. The flow of migrants has grown with the integration of the global economy, and young people are more likely than older persons to migrate across international borders and from rural to urban areas.[9] The reasons for migrating may vary from "push" factors such as poverty, dissatisfaction with local conditions, conflict and pressure on natural resources to "pull" factors such as better earning opportunities and the prospect for better futures.

17. International migration has traditionally been selective of better educated persons from poorer countries, including large numbers of youth. For example, tertiary students from sub-Saharan Africa are the most mobile in the world, with one out of every 16 — or 5.6 per cent — going abroad to study. In contrast, only one out of every 250 North American students, or 0.4 per cent, is studying overseas.[10] Though high-skilled migration can benefit the individual, it often has negative effects on the economy of the home country due to the drain of human capital.[11] In the long term, however, returnees may bring new ideas, approaches and international networks with them, benefiting not only themselves but also society at large.

18. Whatever the reasons for migration, the movement of young people is not without significant risk or hardship, including family disintegration, vulnerability to new diseases, including HIV/AIDS, and difficulties finding work. In addition, with few options and sometimes a fear of deportation or retaliation, many young migrants may fail to report abuse, racism, discrimination or exploitation. At the same time, youth are often well suited for coping with and adapting to the migration process because of their resilience, flexibility and energy.

19. There is a pressing need to recognize the presence of youth as a growing share of migrant streams and to make provisions for their economic, cultural and social integration. Migrant youth are often invisible to social service providers, and are unrecognized in national youth programmes in host countries. As youth migrants often make up an indispensable part of the host society's workforce, there is a pressing need to improve their access to public services in areas such as health, education and training and, more generally, to help improve the public's perception of young migrants.

20. Although the specific contribution of youth to remittances is unknown, for a growing number of countries, remittances have surpassed official development assistance (ODA) in volume and now constitute the second largest source of financial flows ($167 billion to developing countries) after foreign direct investment (FDI), which involves reverse flows in the form of profits, dividends, fees, charges,

[9] See Cynthia B. Lloyd, ed., *Growing up Global: The Changing Transitions to Adulthood in Developing Countries*, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (Washington, D.C., 2006).

[10] See UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2006); Global Education Digest (2006), available at www.uis.unesco.org/ev.php?ID=6513_201&ID2=DO_TOPIC (26 October 2006).

[11] See Economic Commission for Africa, *Economic Report on Africa 2005: Meeting the Challenges of Unemployment and Poverty in Africa* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 05.II.K.9).

interest payments, net "transfer pricing" and so on, and have diminished national economic sovereignty. For many countries, remittances exceed FDI. Compared with other sources of capital that can fluctuate, depending on the political or economic climate, remittances make up a relatively stable source of income, often rising counter-cyclically at times of economic downturns. Such remittances may also provide resources for investment for the development of youth unable to migrate. For example, remittance income may enable youth who do not migrate to finish school and could lead to higher future earnings. Although avenues for safe transmission of remittances may already exist in migrant communities, youth may need support to find and use these avenues. This requires the involvement of community groups, civil society, Governments and private institutions of receiving countries.

21. Young people around the world continue to be concerned about the negative consequences of globalization, especially its impact on the distribution of wealth and environmental degradation. Together with various groups critical of globalization, including non-governmental organizations, and civil rights activists, they have achieved remarkable results in bringing attention to the need to better manage globalization and its consequences, and to ensure the protection of basic human rights.

2. Poverty and hunger

22. Even with the unprecedented economic growth that has occurred in some regions of the world in the last two decades, 18 per cent of all youth — or over 200 million young people — live on less than one dollar a day, and 515 million live on less than two dollars a day.[12] Although poverty is often captured in income per capita, it also includes less easily quantifiable features such as lack of access to public services and to fundamental rights in the workplace and in the community. These aspects are particularly relevant to youth who may not be in the labour force, but may suffer other forms of deprivation.

23. Youth-specific data on hunger and malnutrition are largely unavailable; however, it is known that hunger and malnutrition kill nearly six million children each year.[13] Youth who survived hunger and malnutrition in their childhood years may do so with negative physical, biological and psychological consequences. Many young people continue to live in poverty and experience hunger, especially in rural areas, where education and employment opportunities are often limited. Progress towards reducing the number of hungry people in developing countries by half by 2015, envisaged by the Millennium Development Goals, has been very slow, and the international community is far from reaching its hunger reduction targets and commitments.

24. Hunger and poverty are often more intense in some regions, especially Africa, and in rural areas. Africa continues to suffer from repeated food emergencies caused by ecological and climatic factors and from conflict. Furthermore, urban-rural differentials in young people's access to education translate into urban-rural differentials in employment and income earning potential, thus exacerbating

[12] See Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Youth Report 2005* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.IV.6).

[13] See Food and Agriculture Organization of the Untied Nations, *The State of Food Insecurity in the World, 2005*, available at www.fao.org/docrep/008/a0200e/a0200e00.htm (10 October 2006).

poverty, deprivation and hunger, especially in rural areas. Poverty and hunger are also more intense among indigenous youth, who may have inadequate education, poor health and fewer employment opportunities.

25. Urbanization is a product of economic growth and the shift from agriculturally to industrially based economies (in the last decade, there has been a more than 4 per cent drop in agriculture as a share of total employment, and it is now roughly equal to that of employment in the service sector). Eastern and Southern Africa are subregions with the most rapid rate of urbanization. Asia is also showing strong trends of urbanization, and most of this growth will be in Bangladesh, the People's Republic of China, India, Indonesia and Pakistan. Despite investment in rural areas, young people are more likely to move to cities in order to gain economic opportunity and, as a result of this trend, the average age of the population living in the city in comparison to rural areas will be lower over the next generation. This trend highlights the need to address how poverty affects the lives of urban young people, using lessons learned to improve their lot.

26. It is imperative that the multidimensional aspects of poverty are addressed to ensure that the transition to adulthood does not deepen poverty. Addressing youth poverty also requires that issues such as powerlessness, social exclusion, cultural impoverishment and loss of identity are addressed. A broader approach should also recognize that monetary poverty among youth can interact with and intensify other aspects of poverty in significant ways. For example, when young people have limited financial means, they are likely to limit spending on education and health, with serious repercussions for their effective participation in the global economy. Poverty can also be situational and vulnerable to short-term fluctuations as young people make the transition into independent living and adult roles.

27. It is important to address intergenerational aspects of poverty. Parental economic and non-economic poverty are likely to be passed on to children. Aspects of poverty, such as lack of access to information and communication technologies, which may be less relevant to parents, are critically important to young people if they are to function effectively in a globalized world. It is also important to promote rural development and support urban youth in marginal sectors to help reduce urban-rural disparities in poverty and hunger.

3. Education

28. Education is a basic human right that fosters the realization of full human potential. It provides knowledge and skills that enhance young people's contributions to the global economy and conditions the extent to which they benefit from globalization. Although the current youth population is the most highly educated and trained cohort ever, the pace of globalization and growing demands for new skills require that youth have access to continued education and skills training relevant to labour market needs. Those who do not obtain or are unable to complete their education are more likely to grow up poor.

29. Although the value of classroom education has received the most emphasis, all forms of education, formal or informal, promote critical and creative thinking, problem solving skills, informed decision-making, self-esteem and teamwork. Better-educated young workers have higher earnings, greater job stability and greater upward mobility.[9] Although education can take place over the life cycle, the period of youth is particularly important because it is often the final chance for

young people to acquire basic skills in preparation for the workplace. Success or failure in these years affects the readiness of young people to participate in the global economy and to assume leadership roles in their communities.

30. Governments have made sustained efforts to improve access to education in past decades, resulting in impressive improvements in access to primary and secondary education. Gross enrolment ratios for secondary school, for example, increased from 56 to 78 per cent in the last decade.[14] Generally, opportunities for secondary and especially tertiary education have improved less dramatically than for primary education. This situation, which directly affects youth, reflects in part, the intensification of Government efforts to recover costs in secondary and especially tertiary education. A positive trend, however, is that at the tertiary level, there is a gradual reversal in the male domination of education, with more women than men enrolled in tertiary institutions.

31. Despite progress in other areas, 115 million primary school-age children were not in school in 2002.[15] Further, in most developing countries, a large proportion of primary school graduates do not make the transition to post-primary education. The greatest concentration of educational deprivation is found in Africa and South Asia, and a child in sub-Saharan Africa can expect to attend an average of five to six fewer years of primary and secondary schooling than a child in Western Europe or the Americas. The gap between male and female literacy rates in Asia and Africa also appears to be widening. The largest inequalities are in Western Asia and North Africa, where educationally deprived girls outnumber boys by almost 3 to 1.[16] Youth, especially young women are therefore at a clear disadvantage to be able to cope in the global economy.

32. Youth currently take advantage of opportunities to access education outside their national borders, either through travel or via information and communication technology. For many youth, in both developing and developed countries, access to quality education is constrained by factors such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate infrastructure, lack of instruction materials and a shortage of well-trained staff. The cost of and shortages of equipment and qualified teaching personnel may also limit the academic options and skills that students can acquire at schools. As a result, technically demanding areas, such as the sciences, mathematics and engineering, often lack adequate funding and have lower enrolment. Despite the ongoing revolution in ICT, in many parts of the world, access to modern technology, including computers and audio-visual aids, is limited. This affects the quality of education and makes graduates inadequately prepared for the modern demands of the global economy.

33. Although the instability or unavailability of connections to the Internet bar many countries from linking students to the information superhighway, "schoolnets" have been established in some countries to promote the development of knowledge

[14] See UNESCO, "Global monitoring report on education for all", *Quality Education for All Young People: Challenges, Trends and Priorities* (Paris, 2004).

[15] See UNESCO, "Education for all, year 2000 assessment", in United Nations, *World Youth Report 2003: The Global Situation of Young People* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 03.IV.7).

[16] See UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2005*, available at www.unesco.org/education/gmr_download/chapter3.pdf.

societies by connecting schools to the Internet and sharing information and resources.[17]

34. There is great potential for ICT to promote development that directly benefits young people, particularly in areas of education and livelihoods. In terms of accessing remote and rural areas, radio and low-cost mobile telephone technology are essential. ICT should be used to expand access to teaching and learning materials and to create an environment conducive to improved teaching and learning. Outside the classroom environment, ICT can help provide information on business development and related opportunities for youth. Various new livelihoods can be enabled by ICT, including web-based businesses.

35. Young women face additional challenges with respect to education. The majority still do not reach as high a level of educational attainment as young men. In many developing countries, young women are more likely than men to drop out of school at times of acute financial need or family crises.[18] Early marriage and childbearing are major impediments to girls' ability to complete their schooling. Young women are also likely to be taken out of school to assist with domestic and other chores. Structural problems, such as lack of bathroom facilities for girls and policies that prevent young mothers from continuing their education, still hinder educational attainment.

36. Though more women are participating in the labour force, the educational choices of girls and young women often limit access to certain types of employment and cause wage differentials to become entrenched. These choices are sometimes encouraged by stereotypical casting of women in domestic roles in textbooks and other teaching material. Although curricular revision has accompanied much of the education reform that has occurred in many countries around the world, much more remains to be done to provide relevant classroom education that addresses the needs of both girls and boys.

37. It is becoming increasingly clear that higher education and training are equally important in developing a labour force that supports growth and poverty reduction and helps businesses to survive global competition. Governments need to place greater emphasis on what happens when young people leave school by creating supportive and ongoing skills training that translates into poverty-reducing employment.

38. Training is a good investment if those trained are able to find better jobs and decent work or can use their newly acquired skills in their current positions. Obtaining a good match between the demand for and the supply of training should guide the planning of such programmes. The curricula of many training programmes often do not reflect current labour demands; thus, the acquisition of additional skills may involve extra costs to employers who may be hesitant to hire youth. As training alone does not create jobs, there should be a clearly defined relationship, with emerging labour market demands, to a large degree, shaped by the needs of the global economy and current educational requirements. The training curriculum should also take into account the intended clientele and the economic context. For

[17] See UNESCO, Schoolnet Toolkit (2004), available at www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ict/e-books/SchoolNetKit/SchoolnetKit.pdf.

[18] E. Kane, *Girls' Education in Africa: What Do We Know About Strategies That Work?*, Africa Region Human Development Working Paper Series (World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2004).

some youth, skills training can replace formal education; for most, it will serve as a complement to formal education by providing job-specific skills. As the economy and the global labour market are constantly in flux, skills training needs to be constantly upgraded and expanded to suit the contemporary job market.

39. Characteristics of successful training programmes may include flexibility and responsiveness to the needs of the workplace, links with the labour market and employers, on-the-job training, targeted programmes for disadvantaged youth, inclusion of young people in the informal economy, opportunities for mentorship after training ends and partnerships with local business. Training programmes, job centres or schools may also play a useful role in establishing an initial relationship with an employer for youth through identifying volunteer or structured internship opportunities that serve as vehicles for youth to acquire technical and social skills.

40. It is vital that education policy change the way girls and young women are valued in society. To maximize access for women and girls and to integrate disadvantaged youth, schools need to become more flexible with regard to the ages when students can enrol. This policy will encourage young people to enter the system at an older age or re-enter the system after dropping out.

41. An estimated 7.3 million young women are living with HIV/AIDS, compared to 4.5 million young men. HIV/AIDS represents a huge challenge to many countries, and in developing countries, young women and girls are particularly vulnerable because of poverty and lack of empowerment. The classroom is an appropriate setting to raise awareness. Schools and teachers, as part of comprehensive life skills programmes, should address HIV/AIDS prevention among young men and women. These programmes can equip youth to challenge gender stereotypes, counter discrimination and stigma, communicate effectively and make responsible decisions in their communities.

42. Youth who have dropped out from formal education before acquiring basic literacy skills should be given opportunities to obtain skills training to enhance their life skills and employability. Governments are encouraged to establish systems to ensure the recognition, validation and accreditation of non-formal and informal learning for young people. These measures acknowledge the value of knowledge and experiences gained outside the traditional learning environment and demonstrate the importance of integrating formal and non-formal learning in overall education. These opportunities represent a second chance for youth who may not have had schooling opportunities during their childhood because of the need to work to supplement household incomes. Skills training improves the chances that such youth will become included in the mainstream labour market.

4. Employment

43. Although youth constitute only one fourth of the working-age population, they represent about half of the 191.8 million unemployed persons globally. During the last decade, youth unemployment rates increased globally from 12.1 to 13.7 per cent.[19] Owing in part to the increasing proportion of young people in school, the youth labour force participation rate fell from almost 59 per cent in 1995 to 54.1 per cent in 2005. A global deficit of decent work opportunities has resulted in a situation

[19] See ILO, *Changing Patterns in the World of Work*, International Labour Conference, 95th session (Geneva, 2006).

in which one out of every three youth in the world is either seeking but unable to find work, has given up the job search entirely or is working but still living below the US$ 2-a-day poverty line. Without the right foothold from which to start out right in the labour market, young people are less able to make choices that will improve their own job prospects and those of their future dependents.[20]

44. In most areas, youth unemployment rates are two to three times that of the general population. The ratio of the youth-to-adult unemployment rate was 3.0 in 2005, up from 2.8 in 1995. Moreover, youth have an even smaller share of decent and productive jobs.[21] Youth unemployment rates themselves do not adequately capture the challenges of young people in the labour market. Many work for long hours and for low pay, ultimately remaining poor. Since a majority of youth have not yet acquired the skills and experience required by most employers, their earnings have been falling in comparison to the rapid rise in earnings of skilled workers. This trend has been observed in most countries; in developing countries, this is owed mainly to the increasing size of the informal economy as a dominant source of new jobs.

45. In some developing countries, only 5 to 10 per cent of new entrants into the labour market can be absorbed by the formal economy, leaving the bulk of new jobs to be generated by the informal economy. The International Labour Office estimates that 93 per cent of all jobs available to young people in developing countries are in the informal economy, where there is often little respect for the rights and legal protections of workers, and where youth often work for long hours with little job security and low pay. Wages in the informal economy are estimated to be 44 per cent below formal economy wages.[22]

46. A positive aspect of the global economy and the growth in information and communication technology is the opening of new opportunities for youth to search for jobs. Young people are increasingly looking to online websites for career resources and training. In Europe, use of these sites by youth jumped by 21 per cent, to 9.5 million youth between 2005 and 2006, and outpaced the total growth of youth Internet use in Europe, which grew about 10 per cent, to 36.4 million youth, during the same period.[23] In areas of high Internet penetration, these services facilitate matches between young people and jobs. However, the majority of youth do not yet have access to these tools.

47. The adoption of social and economic policies that catalyse growth and increase the demand for labour is indispensable. Avenues for stimulating job creation include labour-intensive public works projects, incentives for business development and providing support for labour intensive sectors such as agriculture and the service sector, and sectors dominated by high levels of information and communication technology, which is particularly attractive to youth. Outsourcing and offshore manufacturing can provide new opportunities in the global economy, but these trends also raise concerns over job losses, lower wages and poor employment conditions.

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[20] See ILO, *Global Employment Trends for Youth* (International Labour Office, Geneva, 2004).

[21] See ILO, *Global Unemployment Trends Brief* (International Labour Office, Geneva, 2006).

[22] See ILO, *Youth and Work: Global Trends* (International Labour Office, Geneva, 2001).

[23] comScore Europe, "March European traffic to career resources, job search and training/education sites increases 27 percent versus year ago", 24 April 2006.

48. Though often requiring a significant influx of capital, the employment creation effects of labour-intensive public works projects can enhance the supply of jobs and improve local infrastructure in a manner not achievable with private investment. These projects can also stimulate local economies through the demand for tools, equipment and materials. They can also be particularly good entry points into the labour force for youth. In this context, a diverse range of agricultural and rural development projects in sub-Saharan Africa have contributed to expanding employment, but much more remains to be done.

49. Government policies that ensure that economic growth is geared towards employment creation and benefits for the poorer segments of the population can greatly affect the lives of young people. Yet, out of the poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) of 21 African countries, only seven contain macroeconomic goals linked to employment creation, and only 11 have a core section containing an analysis of youth employment. In contrast, over two thirds of the PRSPs focused on the supply side, specifically issues of education and training.[11]

50. In many areas, there is a need to strengthen the link between young employees and their employers. Some countries have supported the development and enhancement of employment support services at university and secondary school levels. Partnerships with the private sector that identify skills in high demand and define entry-level requirements can help to fine-tune the role of educational institutions in easing the school-to-work transition for youth. They can also help to encourage the flow of labour to expanding industries where youth will be most productive.

51. In the light of the large informal economy in many developing countries, particularly in Africa and Latin America, serious consideration should be given to developing the institutional capacity to extend and improve the quality of social protection to youth working in the informal economy. Information on training and financial services for young people should be extended to those involved in the informal economy with the goal of assisting them to move from low to higher-productivity activities and upwards along the continuum of decent work.

52. Explicit in the United Nations Millennium Declaration is the commitment to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work".[24] In response, the United Nations, together with the World Bank and the International Labour Organization, launched the Youth Employment Network. Progress in the work of the Network is described in Section II of the present report.

53. The labour market challenges for young women are often more daunting than they are for men. Overall, the female unemployment rate is significantly higher than the male unemployment rate; the widest gender gaps occur in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Middle East and North Africa. The gender pay gap is negatively correlated with the participation of women in the workplace.[25]

54. Gender inequalities in education, training and recruitment are a major cause of persistent gender wage gaps in all sectors throughout the world. Women are often steered towards household-related or low-skilled jobs characterized by low status or

[24] See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

[25] See World Bank, *Gender and Development in the Middle East and North Africa.* "Constraints on Women's Work", chap. 4 (2004).

little pay; teachers, along with well-trained guidance and vocational counsellors, may be helpful in reducing this type of stereotyping so that young women may pursue life-long learning and real career development. Often, young women will need extra incentives to pursue studies in a male-dominated field. Without many role models in such fields, scholarships and mentoring programmes will open up new areas for women and fuel their confidence and ambitions.

55. To build assets and prosper in a competitive economy, young people often need access to credit and microinsurance. With access to a range of financial tools, young people can plan for their futures and invest according to their own priorities, such as school fees, health care, housing or starting a business. Adding to the survival toolkit of poor youth, these financial services connect this population with little or no assets to productive capital.

56. The needs of young people who engage in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and microenterprises are often overlooked. It is essential for commercial banks to extend lending to youth-headed SMEs and microenterprises. In this regard, central banks and designated financial service regulators must play a proactive role by integrating the objective of increasing access of SMEs and microenterprises to financial services into regulatory and supervisory policies.[26] As part of the enabling environment for youth entrepreneurship, the process of starting and expanding a new business can be streamlined and made less costly, while preserving transparency, so that small and medium-sized enterprises are able to train and hire more youth.

57. Through microfinance, many young women have become active participants in economic activities. Furthermore, because of microfinance and the enabling role it plays, they own assets, including land and housing, play a stronger role in decision-making and take on positions of leadership in their communities. Some areas have witnessed a positive shift in values and expectations that affect the role of women in society. However, in other cases, women's successful businesses have added to their burden, as domestic and family responsibilities may not be shared by male household members.

58. When choosing to engage in business enterprises, many youth have not acquired the financial and business acumen to ensure success in these activities. As starting any enterprise involves risk, entrepreneurship programmes targeting youth should include the provision of adequate information and support to enable them to choose whether or not to engage in economic ventures. Programmes should also be linked with opportunities to upgrade skills, learn business development technique and take advantage of networking opportunities, while providing youth with necessary resources for market access.

5. Proposed indicators for measuring youth development

59. Data limitations impede the assessment of national and international progress in addressing youth development, as outlined in the World Programme of Action for Youth. These limitations apply not only to the priority areas under the cluster "Youth in the global economy", but also to the other two clusters of priorities of the

[26] See United Nations Capital Development Fund and Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *Building Inclusive Financial Sectors for Development* (2006), United Nations (2006) (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.06.II.A.3).

World Programme of Action for Youth — "Youth in civil society" and "Youth well-being". Appropriate and comparable indicators for measuring progress with respect to priorities such as globalization, intergenerational relations, armed conflict and leisure, for example, are difficult to define; and even priority areas, such as health and employment, for which data have traditionally been collected, often lack data that are specific to youth.

60. In response to the request by the General Assembly for the Secretariat, in collaboration with relevant United Nations programmes and agencies, to establish a broad set of indicators for measuring progress towards implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, an expert group meeting on youth development indicators was held at United Nations Headquarters, from 12 to 14 December 2005. The meeting was organized by the United Nations Programme on Youth, within the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and brought together academia, policy advisers, youth organizations, United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations to discuss possible indicators.

61. The value of establishing youth indicators that enable stakeholders to measure youth development over time and to compare progress within and between countries and regions was emphasized. It was noted, in particular, that indicators are essential for monitoring the impact of investment in youth, to help identify areas that need increased action and to advocate youth interests. It was noted that although the international community had made considerable progress in assembling data for tracking achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, data for tracking the specific progress of youth remain limited.

62. Participants in the meeting identified a number of constraints to, and opportunities for, effective data gathering and compilation of indicators for measuring youth development. The indicators discussed in this section are by no means exhaustive. Instead, they are proposed as an initial minimum set of indicators for tracking progress in promoting youth development. It is important to note that, to the extent possible, each indicator should be disaggregated by sex and by age groups of the youth cohort. This will permit better monitoring of the differential development of young women and men and younger and older youth.

Globalization

63. The impact of globalization on young people is hard to measure, and there are considerably fewer data available on the issues related to this topic. However, the ratio of youth to adult international migrants is an indicator that reflects the extent to which youth participate in migration. Although the data are currently only available for migration to countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, they are relevant because a large proportion of international migration is from developing to developed countries. The number of students from a country studying abroad indicates trends in youth study abroad. This indicator also measures the international mobility of students in tertiary education for countries having more than 400 foreign students. In addition, a proxy measure of access to ICT, the proportion of young people who have used the Internet in the last 12 months, is proposed. A better indicator could be Internet usage per week or month; unfortunately, these data are not universally available. The absence of such

data, which measure a critical element of youth involvement in the global economy, indicates a pressing area for future data collection and research.

Poverty and hunger

64. Various factors contribute to the paucity of data on hunger and poverty in relation to youth. The frequently temporary living arrangements of youth may cause them to be excluded from poverty surveys. Difficulties in the definition and measurement of hunger and poverty also frustrate monitoring efforts.

65. Four indicators are, however, proposed for consideration to be included in a compendium of youth development indicators for Governments to use to monitor progress on poverty and hunger. The indicators are the percentages of young people living in poverty and in absolute poverty and the percentages of underweight youth and severely underweight youth. For each indicator, it is important to disaggregate by age and sex, wherever possible. It may also be necessary to disaggregate by regions or other geographical or socio-economic groupings to facilitate within country monitoring.

Education

66. Five indicators are proposed for which global data are available to measure progress in youth education. Youth literacy rates provide a broad indication of the ability of an individual to read and write at a basic level. The gross enrolment ratio in secondary education, which indicates the general level of participation in secondary education, and the net enrolment rate for secondary education, which indicates the extent of participation of youth belonging to the official age group for secondary education, give indications of progress in providing youth with intermediate levels of education considered the minimal levels required to function in today's global economy. The gross enrolment rate for tertiary education is also proposed as a valuable indicator. This indicator gives a sense of access to educational levels essential in the global economy. A final indicator, the transition rate to general secondary education, is also recommended to provide a sense of progression from basic to secondary schooling.

Employment

67. Four indicators are proposed for monitoring progress with respect to youth employment. The youth unemployment rate is available for most countries and indicates the proportion of economically active youth who are unemployed at a given time. A second indicator, the ratio of youth to adult unemployment rates, provides a sense of the prevalence of unemployment among youth relative to adults, and is a much more precise indicator than the unemployment rate. A third indicator, the youth employment to population ratio, provides information on the ability of an economy to create jobs; for many countries, the indicator is often more illustrative than the unemployment rate. Employment-to-population ratios are of particular interest when broken down by sex, as the ratios for men and women can provide information on gender differences in labour market activity. In addition, the youth labour force participation rate, which is a measure of the proportion of the total youth population that engages actively in the labour market, either by working or looking for work, provides a profile of the economically active youth.

Health

68. A number of indicators are available for tracking the health of youth. Five of them are proposed for Governments to consider for measuring youth development. First is adolescent fertility as a percentage of total fertility. This indicator focuses specifically on the 15- to 19-year age group. Childbearing at very young ages often threatens the physical health and social well-being of both mothers and children, and can have negative social and economic effects. This indicator therefore provides a measure not only of the level of fertility, but also of the age burden of childbearing at the national level.

69. A second indicator is the percentage of married or in-union young women currently using modern contraception. Access to and use of contraception is a key determinant of the reproductive health of young persons. Pregnancy and childbirth during the young adolescent years can have negative consequences on young people's pursuit of higher education and on their ability to attain economic stability before starting a family. Of even greater importance is the fact that the availability of contraception protects youth from unwanted pregnancy and the risks of unsafe abortions.

70. Third, the maternal mortality ratio, which measures the risk of death once a woman has become pregnant, provides an indication of the safety of pregnancy and childbearing in a particular context. In many developing countries, complications of pregnancy and childbirth are the leading causes of death among women of reproductive age. While this indicator is not age-disaggregated, it is known that a substantial proportion of maternal mortality occurs among young mothers who are having their first births. Together with adolescent fertility as a percentage of total fertility, this indicator provides a measure of the risk associated with pregnancy and childbirth.

71. Although age-specific death rates are typically relatively low between 15 and 24 years, the top three reported deaths by cause for ages 15 to 24 give an indication of the causes of youth mortality. Variations in these causes across countries provide a sense of differences in national disease priorities for the youth population.

72. The probability of a 15-year-old dying before age 25 provides a sense of the life expectancy of youth. Since these are often among the healthiest years of life, major departures from 100 per cent survival would suggest a need for health interventions.

Environment

73. Youth-specific indicators relating to the environment are hard to define. Three indicators of access to water and sanitation are selected for consideration. They are the percentage of youth severely deprived of water, the percentage of youth severely deprived of sanitation and the percentage of youth severely deprived of shelter. Although these indicators cover only water and sanitation, they may indirectly be proxies for the broader environmental context in which youth live.

Drug abuse

74. Data on drug use are often unreliable, as drug use among youth is likely to be more surreptitious than at other ages. The lifetime prevalence rate of drug abuse among youth indicates whether different types of narcotic drugs (cannabis,

cocaine/crack cocaine, heroin, opium, amphetamine/methamphetamine, ecstasy and inhalants) have been used at least once in a lifetime. It suggests the potential for the development of more frequent and problematic patterns of drug abuse.

Juvenile delinquency

75. In most countries, children and young persons who act against the law are protected, up to a certain age, by a juvenile justice system. As a result, data on juvenile delinquency may be incomplete. It is suggested that, although the data are not available across countries, the rate at which youth are committed to closed institutions be used as a measure.

Participation

76. Three indicators are suggested to measure the level of youth participation. The first is voting age; the most fundamental way to participate in a democracy is by exercising the right to vote. The second is the legal minimum age of marriage without parental consent. This indicator provides information on the age at which people are thought to be mature enough to take responsibility for their own lives and may indicate the extent of youth autonomy. The third indicator is the existence of a national youth council or forum. Youth councils and forums have been the traditional channels of cooperation and exchange of information with national Governments and other decision makers. Although this indicator does not provide any information on the quality of functioning of the youth council, it indicates the existence of machinery for this purpose.

Leisure

77. No globally comparable indicators on leisure among youth are available. There is therefore a need to gather data on youth access to leisure activities such as sports and cultural entertainment. Further discussion is required to determine which indicator would be comparable across countries.

HIV/AIDS

78. A number of indicators are being used to measure the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic globally. Three indicators are proposed for assessing progress with respect to youth and HIV/AIDS. These are the HIV prevalence rate among youth, the percentage of youth with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS and the percentage of youth who used a condom at last high-risk sex.

Girls and young women

79. All indicators proposed here should be disaggregated by sex, wherever possible, to provide a sense of how girls and women fare in relation to all the priority areas. In addition to this, measures of progress in areas such as violence and discrimination against women are required for a full picture of the situation of girls and young women. One indicator for which data are available is the percentage of all women who have undergone female genital cutting. Female genital mutilation or cutting poses serious health risks for many girls and young women, who live mostly in Africa, but also in countries in Asia and the Middle East.

Intergenerational relations

80. Improvements in intergenerational relations are difficult to measure. However, the changing context of intergenerational relations might be assessed by examining the changing age structure of the population. The median age of the population gives a sense of how "young" or "old" a population is, and hence, a sense of the urgency of bridging the intergenerational gap. An additional indicator on this intergenerational context is the proportion of the population above 60 years of age.

Armed conflict

81. The past decade has seen an unprecedented increase in the involvement of young people in armed conflict, both as victims and as perpetrators. Unfortunately, no age-disaggregated data is available, nor is there agreement on how to define a country in conflict. A proposed proxy indicator is the estimated number of youth refugees by country of origin, which provides insight into the number of young refugees.

Information and communication technologies

82. The indicators identified to measure progress on youth and in ICT are the proportion of young people who used a computer in the last 12 months and the proportion of young people who used the Internet in the last 12 months. These indicators refer to the use of computers and the Internet from any location, including work. Young people's access to the computer and the Internet vary widely, depending on the context in which they live. The differentials across countries indicate the development gap among youth.

C. Conclusions and recommendations

83. The interrelationships among the priority areas discussed in the present report strongly suggest that a holistic approach is required to address youth development in the changing global economy. It requires that Governments work with various stakeholders, particularly young people and youth-led organizations, to develop integrated solutions that support the full transition of young people to adulthood.

84. As suggested by the report, the measurement of progress, with the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth, has been constrained by the paucity of data in a number of priority areas. The suggested indicators of youth development in the areas of globalization, poverty and hunger, education and employment represent only initial steps to address this major gap. These indicators have been proposed as core requirements for intercountry comparisons of progress with regard to youth development. Beyond these core indicators, Governments, civil society and national youth organizations can also gather data on additional indicators, as necessary, to better capture and monitor the progress of individual countries in youth development. This would deepen the understanding of transitions to adulthood and support more innovative and large-scale youth development interventions.

85. In view of the above, and the tendency for youth development to be constrained in the context of globalization, the Commission for Social

Development, at its forty-fifth session, and the General Assembly, at its sixty-second session, may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) **Integrate and protect youth in the global economy through the provision of employment under decent work conditions. This is essential for reaping the full returns to national investment in human resource development, especially in the education sector;**

(b) **Ensure that youth development, especially their access to food, education and employment, are specifically addressed in national policies and programmes, including PRSPs and other policy documents that aim to foster the participation of countries in the global economy;**

(c) **Ensure adequate funding for education, including programmes geared at fostering the acquisition of requisite skills by youth, in order to overcome the mismatch between available skills and the demands of the labour market shaped by globalization;**

(d) **Improve the ability of young people to make a better transition into the world of work and enhance their access to the changing labour market. Governments should promote policies that expand opportunities for youth to get quality education and training. Skills development must be combined with other programmes that are targeted at the specific labour market needs of youth and that focus on the multiple needs of those most at risk of joblessness. Skills training must be incorporated into education planning at all stages, as it provides an opportunity for youth to realign their skills to the changing needs of the competitive international economy;**

(e) **Promote youth involvement in information and communications technologies in all sectors, in a manner that encourages youth to assume leadership roles in developing and modifying ICT to better reach youth living in areas outside current ICT networks;**

(f) **Encourage Governments to establish mechanisms to monitor the development of youth in the context of the global economy. In particular, Governments may wish to promote the establishment of comprehensive databases on the youth indicators proposed in the report within their youth ministries or similar offices. For each indicator, it is important to disaggregate by age and sex whenever possible.**

II. Progress achieved by the Youth Employment Network

A. Introduction

86. The Youth Employment Network was established in 2001 to facilitate implementation of the global commitment to "develop and implement strategies that give young people everywhere a real chance to find decent and productive work", as contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000.[24] It is a partnership formed by the Secretary-General and the heads of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank that underpins and supports all the Millennium Development Goals.

87. The Network focuses its activities on the establishment of a network of networks at the political, technical and economic levels. Towards that end, it has worked to foster partnerships to promote youth employment. Building on the core partnership of the United Nations, the World Bank and ILO, it has been able to bring together policymakers, employers' and workers' organizations, young people and other stakeholders to pool their skills and know-how and diverse experiences to shape coherent policy and programme solutions to youth employment challenges.

88. The Network promotes a comprehensive approach to youth employment, which integrates macro and microeconomic policy interventions, addresses both labour supply and demand dimensions, and underlines the quality and quantity of employment. The process for developing national action plans provides a framework for national consultations on youth employment and for setting priorities that have broad-based ownership. These national action plans on youth employment also provide a delivery vehicle for developing and implementing strategies that give young people a real and equal opportunity to find full and productive employment and decent work.

89. The Network combines a political strategy with the technical experience and implementation capacity of its partner organizations to address the ongoing challenges of unemployment and underemployment among young people. It therefore plays an important role in facilitating communication and information sharing, linking good practice initiatives and stakeholders. In addition, it is assisting countries in developing their national action plans, strengthening the capacity of partners in this process, especially youth, and increasing the knowledge base and attention on issues such as the connection between youth employment and child labour and between youth employment and collective security.

B. High-Level Panel on Youth Employment

90. In 2001, the Secretary-General appointed a High-Level Panel of 12 experts and practitioners on youth employment to advise the heads of the United Nations, the World Bank and ILO on youth employment policy and to mobilize opinion and action in favour of youth employment worldwide. Their 2001 policy recommendations (see A/56/422) provide the overall guidance for the work of the Network. The comprehensive strategy of the High-Level Panel for achieving decent and productive work for young people includes the following elements:

(a) A focus on four global priorities — employment creation, entrepreneurship, employability and equal opportunities — that recognizes the need for comprehensive, integrated strategies;

(b) A delivery mechanism based on the preparation and implementation of national action plans on youth employment (using a multi-stakeholder approach, including youth participation);

(c) A follow-up process of information sharing and policy development (including peer partnerships).

91. General Assembly resolution 57/165, on promoting youth employment, translates the strategic vision of the High-Level Panel into a strong and focused

intergovernmental mandate, and encourages all Member States to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment.[27]

92. When the High-Level Panel met in 2003, it invited the full participation of a youth panel and representatives from ministries and Governments, social partners and civil society. At that meeting, agreement was reached on the next five steps for building a Global Alliance for Youth Employment. A roadmap and guidelines on implementation policies and best practices were issued to facilitate efforts by countries to address the four global priorities of employability, entrepreneurship, equal opportunities and employment creation. Social dialogue on youth employment and the key role of trade unions and employers' organizations were also highlighted. In particular, the need to involve youth organizations in all initiatives addressing youth employment challenges was recognized.

93. At its 2004 meeting, the High-Level Panel focused on how to facilitate the development of national action plans on youth employment. At that meeting, the President of the World Bank affirmed the support of that organization, as well as his personal commitment, to mobilize Governments in lead countries to prepare national action plans in time for the five-year review of the Millennium Development Goals in September 2005. The Youth Consultative Group was launched at that meeting. The Group represents youth and their organizations, interacts with the High-Level Panel and provides inputs to the decision-making processes of the Youth Employment Network. The Network was also requested at that meeting to present a comprehensive review of the linkages between employment, development and collective security that could serve as a basis for a coherent policy response.

94. At its 2005 meeting, the High-Level Panel recognized that the strategy it had laid out in 2001 had been widely accepted by Member States and Youth Employment Network partners and recommended that the Network take on three new areas of action: capacity-building for sustainable partnership engagement; knowledge management and communication; and coordination and facilitation, including leveraging and pooling political, technical and financial resources for youth employment initiatives. These areas of action are directed to support the development of national action plans in lead countries of the Network.[28] Thus, in addition to the implementation of the policy recommendations on youth employment formulated by the High-Level Panel,[29] the current phase of Network operations includes objectives set under these three new broad areas of action.

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[27] The resolution also invited ILO, within the framework of the Youth Employment Network, to prepare a global analysis and evaluation of these action plans in order to encourage countries to take action nationally, to initiate a peer review of action taken with others and to provide a forum for discussing the international dimensions of the youth employment challenge. The national action plans and progress reports submitted served as the basis for the report of the Secretary-General, "Global analysis and evaluation of national action plans on youth employment" (A/60/133).

[28] Taken together, these incorporate the six areas for action by the Youth Employment Network recommended by the High-Level Panel in May 2005.

[29] These policy messages form part of the conclusions adopted at the 93rd session of the International Labour Conference; see "Resolutions concerning youth employment" (Geneva, 2005).

C. Political leadership, support and national action

95. The High-Level Panel on Youth Employment called upon countries to volunteer as lead countries to take political leadership on youth employment within the international community and within the framework of the broader development agenda. These lead countries, with commitment at the highest level, undertake to prepare national reviews and action plans on youth employment and to share their experiences in order to encourage other countries to do likewise. To date, Azerbaijan, Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Egypt, Georgia, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Jamaica, Namibia, Nigeria, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Uganda and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland have become lead countries of the Youth Employment Network and have reaffirmed their commitment to youth employment at the highest level. These 19 countries represent broad regional and economic diversity.

96. Many more countries have declared their commitment to the issue of youth employment and have provided support to lead countries within the framework of the Youth Employment Network. To date, Canada, China, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom have provided political, technical and/or financial support to the Network. The financial support of Finland, Ireland and Sweden has sustained the core operations of the Network. Sweden has pledged support for the next three years (mid-2006 to mid-2009), both for the Youth Employment Network secretariat and activities in lead countries. Canada is funding an initiative to place young Canadians in eight lead countries as Network Associates to support these countries in their development of national action plans.

97. The combination of lead country initiatives and support from other countries has strengthened the community of countries committed to promoting youth employment. This increase in the number of countries, as well as the range of experience, knowledge and resources they have brought into the network, has facilitated peer partnerships in initiatives to tackle youth employment challenges.

D. Status of national action plans on youth employment

98. The report of the Secretary-General on the theme "Global analysis and evaluation of national action plans on youth employment" (A/60/133) reviewed progress achieved by Member States with regard to national reviews and action plans on youth employment. The global analysis and evaluation was based on the submissions from 39 Member States that had responded to a note verbale of the Secretary-General dated 26 November 2004 requesting Member States to submit their plan or report on progress made in the elaboration of national reviews and action plans on youth employment. Many other Member States have since prepared or are in the process of preparing national action plans or other policy or strategic documents that address youth employment.

99. The global analysis examined the submissions from Member States against the guidelines provided in the report of the Secretary-General on promoting youth employment (A/58/229, annex I). The guidelines recommended that countries: (a) review and analyse past policies and programmes on youth employment to build

on lessons learned; draw on existing reports or policies on youth employment, such as poverty reduction strategies, national youth policies and national employment policies, and reports on ILO conventions relevant to youth employment to ensure that the national action plan is integrated into national policymaking processes and funding mechanisms; (b) involve young people, different government ministries and departments, employers, workers and civil society in the preparation of the plan; (c) put in place mechanisms, baseline indicators and statistical data for monitoring progress and evaluating the national action plan, and provide baseline indicators or statistical data to monitor progress; and (d) seek, as appropriate, assistance from the Youth Employment Network core agency partners — ILO, the World Bank, and the United Nations Secretariat — or from other outside institutions in the drafting process.

100. The development of a national action plan can be a long and complicated process, involving numerous stakeholders. The Youth Employment Network has been actively supporting lead countries and other Member States in the formulation of their plans by providing, through its core agency partners, technical guidance, training and activities to build capacity for the development and/or implementation of action plans. To facilitate the development of national action plans, the core agency partners of the Network have prepared or are in the process of preparing tools to assist countries.

101. ILO, for example, has prepared its guidelines for the preparation of national action plans on youth employment[30] to assist different groups — particularly government officials, representatives of employers' and workers' organizations, youth groups and other relevant stakeholders — to work together in countries in preparing a balanced and comprehensive national action plan on youth employment. It provides guidance to national institutions with regard to the information to be collected in preparation of a technical advisory mission fielded and coordinated by one of the core agency partners at the request of the country.

102. As policymakers seek measures to help young people make the transition into the labour market, they are hampered by a lack of information on what options are available, what works in different situations, and what has been tried and failed. In response, the World Bank is assembling a global inventory of interventions to support young workers. By documenting these experiences and consolidating the lessons learned through synthesis reports, this project will build a knowledge base on what can be done to support young workers. This knowledge will be accessible to policymakers and others concerned about youth employment.[31]

103. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Youth Employment Network secretariat, has prepared a report on the theme "Review of national action plans on youth employment: putting commitment into action", which is a more comprehensive version of the report of the Secretary-General (A/60/133), with additional analysis.[32] It details the substance and focus of national action plans, using the four global priorities for youth employment mapped

[30] These guidelines are still in development and are currently being pilot-tested in a number of countries.

[31] This project is being undertaken by Human Development Network, Social Protection Unit (HDNSP), under the auspices of the Youth Employment Network. It is being financially supported by the German Government (BMZ).

[32] This report is forthcoming.

by the High-Level Panel on Youth Employment. There is an assessment of the extent to which these strategies have been embedded in policies, and the degree of coordination between different ministries in tackling the youth employment challenge. Each subsection concludes with suggestions for determining benchmarks to assess progress towards the goal of creating opportunities for decent and productive work for young women and men.

104. In addition, the Youth Employment Network secretariat has prepared a resource directory for lead countries of the Youth Employment Network[33] to guide lead countries through the process of meeting their commitments to youth employment at the national and global levels, as well as to assist in strengthening the community of lead countries. It includes a module on the process of formulating a national action plan on youth employment to complement the policy guidelines prepared by ILO, drawing on experiences in a number of lead countries.

E. Strengthening youth participation

105. The Youth Employment Network recognizes the value of youth engagement in tackling youth employment challenges at all levels and is committed to promoting youth participation.

106. The Youth Employment Network is promoting young people as assets and a catalyst for development. Consultations with young people are instrumental in the work of the Youth Employment Network, just as it must be an integral part of any national youth employment strategy.

107. The means by which the Network has institutionalized this commitment is through the creation of a standing Youth Consultative Group. The Youth Consultative Group was launched in 2004, comprising representatives of large international and regional youth organizations to provide advice and guidance to the work on youth employment.[34] It is working to represent the concerns of young people on the function, direction and priorities of the Youth Employment Network. It interacts with the High-Level Panel and provides input into decision-making processes. It also serves as a catalyst and a resource to support youth participation in the development, implementation and review of national action plans. In particular, the Group can support Governments in the development of national youth consultative mechanisms to provide youth-specific inputs and expertise into the policymaking process.

108. The Youth Consultative Group actively supports youth involvement and active participation in a number of ways, including the development and implementation of youth participation mechanisms; mobilizing youth groups in lead countries,

[33] The directory is in the final stages of production and is currently being circulated among lead country focal persons for comments.

[34] The Youth Employment Network Youth Consultative Group, holding Youth Employment Network partner status, consists of representatives of 13 youth organizations drawn from a wider pool of 30 organizations: World Organization of the Scout Movement; Asian Student Association; Arab Youth Union; African Youth Network; European Youth Forum; Latin American Youth Forum; International Confederation of Free Trade Unions Youth; International Organization of Employers Youth; Mouvement International des Etudiants Catholiques; International Young Democrat Union; International Federation of Liberal Youth; International Union of Socialist Youth; International Movement of Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth.

encouraging them to form networks and facilitating their introduction to Governments and United Nations agency country offices to enhance their opportunities to become involved in national policy development processes; and contributing to workshops conducted to build the capacity of youth groups to participate effectively in the process to develop national action plans.

109. Young people have been very active, both in lead and other countries. The Youth Consultative Group is collaborating with youth organizations and individuals to facilitate increased access to Governments and policymakers in order to promote greater inputs from youth into the various youth employment policymaking processes. Their involvement is leading to increased voice and acceptance for youth in local, national, regional and global initiatives on youth employment. In some countries — Georgia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Rwanda, Nigeria and Namibia — youth organizations have even been the driving force that has shaped the decision by their Governments to become lead countries.

110. Building on their global work and experiences in the lead countries, the Youth Consultative Group, in partnership with the Youth Employment Network secretariat, is producing a guide for youth to facilitate and motivate their participation in youth employment policymaking. This publication also provides guidance for other stakeholders, primarily Governments, on how and why to engage youth, highlighting good practices on youth participation, empowerment and capacity-building in relation to youth employment policy. It provides a brief overview on the broader issue of youth engagement in policymaking, highlighting the main issues, debates and literature in this regard, including how to ensure equitable representation. It explores the concepts of participation and empowerment, and discusses different levels of participation that can be achieved and identifies relevant tools and methods used by youth groups to achieve sustainable participation, to build the capacity of youth and to empower them to participate effectively. Finally, it provides detailed guidance on what youth can do to get involved in youth employment initiatives using a range of tools and methodologies. The guide charts successes and challenges faced by youth involved in youth employment policymaking processes, as well as a list of resources where youth can find support in their endeavours.

111. Several other initiatives to assist youth have also been undertaken by the Youth Employment Network partners. For example, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs developed a toolkit, "Making commitments matter", to assist youth to participate in the 10-year review of the World Programme of Action for Youth, which was summarized in a report of the Secretary-General submitted to the General Assembly (A/60/156). The toolkit was developed for youth organizations and organizations working with youth. It can be used as a tool to assess progress of countries towards achieving the goals of the World Programme of Action for Youth; prioritize the work of youth organizations, based on those findings; and initiate action at the national level.

112. Youth organizations from around the world came together with the World Bank, to form the Youth, Development and Peace Network in 2005. Its mission is to facilitate dialogue, interaction and joint efforts between youth organizations and the World Bank, together with other actors involved in poverty reduction and various development issues. One pillar of the network focuses on the issue of employment,

and the Youth, Development and Peace Network is in close contact with the Youth Consultative Group to exploit synergies and avoid duplication of work in this field.

113. The World Bank has launched a trust fund to support training and capacity-building activities to strengthen youth organization involvement in decision-making processes. This decision underlines the conviction of the World Bank that young people represent a powerful force for change and that they need to be empowered to participate actively in development. The initial financial support for this multilateral trust fund was provided by the German Government. The trust fund activities will include a mapping of projects and activities supporting youth development being carried out by youth groups and donor organizations; a needs assessment of youth organizations based on this mapping; the design and implementation of training and capacity-building activities; and sharing experiences regionally.

114. The Youth Employment Network organized a high-level dialogue on youth employment, which was followed by a technical meeting in Geneva in June 2005. That event, co-financed by the World Bank, brought international policymakers face to face with young people to discuss the role of youth employment in the international development agenda. The interactive panel discussion involved labour ministers, members of tripartite delegations to the International Labour Conference, representatives of young people from the Youth Consultative Group and lead countries, as well as experts and practitioners on youth employment from international and civil society organizations. Discussions revolved around the issue of job creation.

115. The World Bank held consultations with youth around the world to gather inputs for the *World Development Report 2007: Development and the Next Generation*, which has a chapter on youth employment (see www.worldbank.org). The report was launched in September 2006.

F. Engaging partners and capacity-building

116. The main activity of the Youth Employment Network in its first three years focused on establishing the Network, which involved awareness-raising and advocacy on youth employment issues and establishing partnerships to tackle the challenges of youth employment. Although this aspect of the work of the Network continues, the focus of its work has shifted to more operational activities at the country and regional levels because the issue of youth employment has become more coherent and widely recognized by Member States and other stakeholders.

117. To date, bodies to coordinate national action plans have been set up in Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Jamaica, Senegal, Sri Lanka and Uganda, with the support of the Network. These developments demonstrate the strength of the national partnerships to put youth employment commitments into action.

118. The Youth Employment Network continues to build and expand networks, including deepening the involvement of more organizations, social actors and technical partners. The range of partnerships now spans lead countries, multilateral organizations, the private sector, youth groups, the academic community, representatives of employers and workers, and civil society groups. New multilateral partners, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), and the United

Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), are exploring or developing operational activities with the Network.

119. Products for advocacy and awareness-raising are being distributed, both through the country offices of the core agencies and youth groups. These include: information leaflets; Youth Employment Network fact sheets; Network information packs for potential partners, agency staff, journalists and the general public; the Youth Employment Network Newsletter, with an ever-growing partner and issues coverage; and a comprehensive interactive website. A working paper series was launched in 2005, with the first paper entitled "Youth employment promotion: a view of the ILO's work and the lessons learned". The second paper in the series will focus on World Bank messages on youth employment.

120. The Youth Employment Network has provided, leveraged and pooled resources to support activities on youth employment undertaken by a wide range of partners, including lead countries, core agencies, youth organizations, civil society organizations and other social partners. Assistance, including seed funding in some cases, to support activities on youth employment have expanded. For example, the Network was invited by UNOWA to help coordinate its work on regional security and youth employment. The UNOWA report on the theme "Youth unemployment and regional security in West Africa" was first issued in December 2005 and reissued in 2006.[35] It provides concrete recommendations on youth employment and calls on the Network to facilitate the establishment of a regional focal point for this issue. Support from the United Kingdom, Sweden and UNIDO have enabled the establishment of the Youth Employment Network/UNOWA unit for youth employment and regional security in West Africa.

121. There has been financial assistance from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for project activities in the lead countries, Senegal and Sri Lanka, as well as continued support from the German Development Cooperation (GTZ) for Youth Employment Network activities in Egypt and Uganda. The BMZ has also financed the global inventory of interventions to support young workers, which is being conducted by the World Bank under the auspices of the Network. There are projects on youth employment in a number of countries in Latin America — Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, Peru and the Dominican Republic — that are being funded by the Spanish Employers' Association, private sector companies and the Spanish Government.

122. The Youth Employment Network has also been working with core agencies to develop improved youth employment indicators in order to address the inherent weaknesses of the unemployment rate of young people for measuring progress towards the youth employment goal of the Millennium Development Goals. ILO continues to produce and refine global and regional estimates on youth labour market indicators that have been published in its *Global Employment Trends for Youth* publications since 2004. These indicators are intended to both inform policies at the national level and to contribute to the overall monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals. In this connection, an expert group meeting on youth development indicators, organized by the United Nations Programme on Youth in December 2005, served as a forum to examine indicators used by the United Nations

[35] See UNOWA, "Youth unemployment and regional insecurity in West Africa", UNOWA issue papers, second edition (Dakar, Senegal, August 2006).

system to assess youth development, as a follow-up to General Assembly resolution 60/2 on policies and programmes involving youth. The proposed indicators will be included in the *World Youth Report 2007* and are referenced in section I of the present report.

123. The Youth Employment Network is actively promoting the inclusion of youth employment issues in the PRSPs. In that regard, the GTZ has supported efforts by youth organizations in Uganda to contribute to the PRSP process in their country. This project was part of a series of activities developed by GTZ to support the participation and empowerment of youth in national development strategies. The United Nations Programme on Youth and the National Council of Swedish Youth Organizations, with financial support from the Swedish Government, have initiated a technical assistance project on the theme "Tackling poverty together: the role of young people in poverty reduction strategies". The project will recruit a team of young people from seven countries — Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Sweden, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia — to participate in workshops aimed to strengthen the role of young people in poverty reduction strategies in Africa.

G. Recommendations

124. On the basis of the progress that has been achieved by the Youth Employment Network, the General Assembly may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) **Encourage those countries that have prepared national reviews and action plans on youth employment to move forward to the implementation stage. Other countries that have not yet prepared national action plans should be encouraged to do so;**

(b) **Encourage all countries to submit periodic progress reports on their national action plans to address youth employment, and to invite the Youth Employment Network secretariat to submit a report on progress achieved, including progress in the preparation and implementation of national action plans on youth employment, to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session.**